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MACBETH

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Eight Poets, Essays of Yesterday & Today, Galsworthy's Justice, Human Comedy, Meaning of Life, The English Muse, etc., etc.

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M. [redacted],

1961

SHAKESPEARE'S

MACBETH

(1606)

My words fly up, my thoughts remain below:
Words without thoughts never to heaven go.

SHAKESPEARE

MACBETH

AT A

GLANCE

—:o:—

Shakespeare began *Macbeth* probably in 1605 and completed it the next year. The date is controversial. Critics do, however, acknowledge it as a *great epic drama* written "in a kind of *fever heat*," and a tragedy "outlined with *great boldness* and *simplicity*." The *fascination of the supernatural* raises this play to the *height of dramatic sublimity*. In its length it is the *shortest* of all Shakespeare's tragedies. The plot unfolds in *five* Acts spreading over *twenty-eight* scenes. The story is drawn from Holinshed's *Chronicle of Scottish History* with "occasional references, perhaps, to earlier Scottish sources." Very great credit goes to Shakespeare for developing Holinshed's 'bald record' of events into a rich piece of literature.

EXCEPTIONAL FEATURES

The exceptional features lending *Macbeth* a marked distinction in the great class of literature to which it belongs may be summed up under three points :—

● Supernatural interludes have been interweaved with the tragic story in which Fate has been 'weirdly personified.' ● Action proceeds with rapidity wholly without parallel in the rest of Shakespeare's plays. [The critical scenes are unusually short—the great sleep-walking scene is only seventy lines long.] ● The 'comic relief,' though little, is yet so effective that it may be claimed that Shakespeare has never introduced a bolder relief with deeper intensity in any of his tragedies. These and all the other critical aspects of this play will be discussed later in more exhaustive detail. Here, it is very

necessary for us to grasp the main story of *Macbeth* at once.

STORY

Macbeth is a near relative of the king of Scotland named Duncan. As he crushed a rebellion successfully, he is greatly favoured at the court of the king. When Macbeth is on his way back to the court accompanied by Banquo, another of the king's generals, a strange thing happens. He meets three witches, who appear upon a heath. These three 'weird sisters' greet him in succession as 'Thane of Glamis,' 'Thane of Cawdor,' and 'The King.' High ambitions stir up in the heart of Macbeth when the last title is prophetically pronounced. The other general, Banquo, struck with wonder at the strange appearance and prophecy of the three witches, puts some questions to them. The three sisters, turning to him, greet him in puzzling terms which he fails to understand. They address him as "lesser than Macbeth and greater, not so happy yet much happier," etc., saying which they melt into thin air. Macbeth stands revolving in thought. Banquo is highly confused. The two generals stand pondering over the strange prophecy. Suddenly some messengers come from the king. To the surprise of Macbeth they confer upon him the title of Thane of Cawdor. One prophecy of the witches being thus fulfilled so exactly, the rest of the prophecies work on Macbeth's mind and he bends all his thoughts on the last one—how to become the king. When Macbeth and Banquo arrive before the king, Duncan, he welcomes the Thane of Cawdor with great pleasure and proposes to add to the honour of the general with a visit to his castle situated at Inverness. Out of his pleasure the king also nominates his son, Malcolm, as his successor. Macbeth goes home, informs Lady Macbeth of his success in the battlefield and of the strange prophecies of the three witches. Lady Macbeth is an ambitious woman and wishes to see her husband become king at any rate. As the news of the king's approach to Macbeth's house is conveyed by a messenger, Lady Macbeth plainly hints to her husband about the suitability of a chance of putting Duncan to death. In the meanwhile the king arrives accompanied

by his two sons and a group of nobles. Lady Macbeth receives the royal personage with great show of loyalty. The king enjoys a pleasant day in the castle of Macbeth and when night approaches, he retires to bed early. Macbeth ponders over the question of murdering the king but cannot make up his mind and hesitates. Lady Macbeth tries to excite him to kill the king and uses all sorts of taunts, etc., to impress upon her husband that the king's murder is indispensible for the fulfilment of the last prophecy of the witches. At midnight Macbeth is on the look-out. In his imagination he sees a dagger which appears to beckon him to the king's sleeping chamber. Lady Macbeth gives a signal and Macbeth goes out to put the king to death. The Lady has already drugged the guards and was even ready to do the deed herself, but she failed because she found King Duncan to have a resemblance to her own father. Macbeth, however, murders the king and joins his wife. He is in a state of nervousness. Out of stupidity he brings the blood-stained dagger with him. Lady Macbeth persuades him to carry the dagger back and to smear the sleeping grooms with blood. Macbeth refuses to do so. The Lady thereupon snatches the dagger from his hand, goes to the grooms, stains their clothes with blood and leaves the dagger with them. The sound of knocking is heard and she hurriedly withdraws with her husband into their sleeping chamber. The porter posted at the gate is drunk. He opens the gate. Macduff and Lennox, two noblemen of the king, enter. The porter makes some silly remarks under intoxication and lets them come in. Macbeth comes out of his sleeping chamber in his night-gown. He pretends to have been roused from his sleep by the sound of knocking. Macduff goes to the king's chamber but presently returns struck with horror at the discovery of murder. Lady Macbeth also comes out. Macbeth proceeds to the king's chamber as if to satisfy himself. He returns in a fit of pretended anger and furiously puts the two grooms to death in order to throw off the suspicion from his shoulders. Lady Macbeth faints and is carried away. The two sons of the king are sure of Macbeth's treachery. They take flight for their own safety. It is reported next morning that

on the night of the murder great disturbances were felt in Nature. Macduff informs that the disappearance of the two princes has been taken as evidence of their criminality and that Macbeth is to be crowned the king at Scone because he is accepted as the next lawful heir to the throne. As the witches had prophesied royalty to Banquo's son, Fleance, Macbeth now lends all his thoughts to put both to death so that the throne may be safe for his own line. Lady Macbeth, who does not know her husband's designs, tries to cheer him up. Macbeth indirectly tells her of putting Banquo and his son to death. At a suitable opportunity Macbeth makes arrangements for getting Banquo killed. Banquo falls by the murderer's knife while he is on his way to the palace. His son Fleance takes flight for the safety of his own life. Macbeth gives a state banquet in honour of his new dignity. Lady Macbeth plays the hostess. While this banquet is going on, the murderer of Banquo appears at the door. Macbeth goes to meet him and is informed of Banquo's death and Fleance's escape. Macbeth is greatly perturbed at Fleance's flight. Lady Macbeth calls him to attend the guests. Macbeth is much unnerved and when he returns to take his seat he is struck with horror, to see the ghost of Banquo occupying his chair. Macbeth stares at the ghost and makes wild remarks out of extreme terror. His lady tries to soothe him. The ghost disappears and Macbeth regains his self-possession. The ghost then appears again to drive Macbeth to madness. Lady Macbeth dismisses the guests apologetically. Macbeth decides to search and meet the witches again to draw some conclusion about his future. In the meanwhile Hecate, the mistress of the witches, has taken the three witches to task for having predicted the future to Macbeth without her previous permission. She, out of anger, lays down a plan to ruin Macbeth, the usurper of Duncan's throne, by creating in him the sense of complete security or over-confidence which is the chief enemy of human beings. Macbeth turns tyrant and Macduff, a nobleman of Scotland, goes to the English Court where Malcolm, the elder son of Duncan, has gone to seek the support of the English king in overthrowing Macbeth, the tyrant and usurper. Macbeth,

who is anxious to have fuller information regarding his future, comes to the witches. Suddenly an armed head rises from a cauldron and warns Macbeth against the Thane of Fife. Then appears an apparition of a bloody child. It bids Macbeth not to fear any man born of woman. Thereafter yet another phantom wearing a crown appears. It assures Macbeth that he will remain invincible until Birnam Wood would come to Dunsinane. Macbeth wants to know if Banquo's descendants would ever reign. In answer to that he is shown a procession of eight kings followed by the ghost of Banquo. Seeing Banquo's descendants in all pomp of royalty, Macbeth falls in a state of frantic agitation. The witches disappear. Immediately Macbeth is informed by Lennox that Macduff has fled. Macbeth, being baffled in his design against Macduff, decides to put his children to death. He gets Lady Macduff and her children killed through hired ruffians. Macduff is with Malcolm trying to invade Scotland with the help of the English king, and when he is informed of the cruel slaughter of his wife and children he is overtaken with grief at Macbeth's atrocious villainy. He determines to take revenge. By this time Macbeth and Lady Macbeth have secured themselves in the strong castle of Dunsinane. The condition of Lady Macbeth is miserable. She is afflicted with a malady and is labouring under lunacy and somnambulism. She cannot sleep properly and suffers from fits. She stirs up at night, walks about in her sleep and talks to herself and her husband of the murder of Duncan and Banquo. While so talking of various circumstances connected with these two murders she continues to rub her hands as if trying to wipe away the blood staining them. The tyrannical rule of Macbeth creates disruption. The nobles desert him and join the army of Malcolm who invades Scotland. Macbeth knows that the army of his foe is increasing swiftly in strength but he does not feel any anxiety. The reason is that he was over-confident due to the prediction of the witches who had declared to him that he would remain unshaken in his high position as long as Birnam Wood did not march to Dunsinane. The thing which perturbs him is the incurable malady of

Malcolm. Malcolm plays a trick. He orders each of his soldiers to carry a branch before him while invading the castle of Macbeth so that the enemy may not be able to guess the actual strength of his force. While Macbeth is busy preparing the defence of the castle he hears loud wails. He is told that Lady Macbeth is dead. This news is followed by another. A messenger comes crying and tells Macbeth that Birnam Wood is coming towards the castle. This makes Macbeth desperate. The invading army throwing down the branches of trees in a field attacks Macbeth's forces. A hot battle is fought. The castle is captured by the enemy but Macbeth boasts that his life is charmed and that no man born of woman can do him any harm. He is much disappointed to hear that Macduff is not born of woman because he was torn out of the wcmb before the full period of gestation was over. Anyhow, he continues to fight recklessly till he is slain by his opponent. Malcolm is then proclaimed king. The story ends here.

CHIEF CHARACTERISTICS

● It should be remembered that in the words of Arthur Mee *Macbeth* is one of the supremely great plays, a masterpiece of imagination. It is a terrible lesson of what ambition may lead to when it takes to evil ways.

● It is a page from the history of Scotland, far back in the days before the Conqueror came to England. Shakespeare found in Holinshed's Chronicle the story of Macbeth's murder of King Duncan and his seizing of the throne, and mixing his dramatic materials as suited his purpose, he freely changed the destinies and developed the characters of the people. He wrote the play when he was forty-two.

● There is some reason for believing that the play was meant to please King James the First. James, though he was called the wisest fool in Christendom, firmly believed in witchcraft, and witchcraft is the basis of this play. It takes us back to prophecies by witches that Banquo's sons should sit in Macbeth's seat and reign as kings of Scotland.

● Tradition tells us that one son of Banquo did escape the fury of Macbeth, and lived to found the Stuart line of kings.

● We must remember that, though kings and poets believed in witchcraft then, there was no such thing existing, and the prophecies which changed the mind and ruined the character of Macbeth were probably invented by Shakespeare to accomplish his purpose. He wished to show us a man willing to pay any price for a throne, and he used witchcraft as an influence in changing a good man to a bad man.

● We see in Macbeth a man who had made an honourable start in life. A man of thought and imagination, he believed (as Shakespeare himself believed) in mysterious powers governing and controlling the world. Proud and ambitious in a high degree, he was ready to listen to malicious spirits of the air, and urged on by an ambitious wife with a heart of stone, he was swept off his feet. His belief in a dazzling destiny carried away his mind, until, after plunging deeper and deeper in crime, he lost success, honour, love, respect, and life itself.

● The play contains one of the most wonderful scenes in Shakespeare, the sleep-walking of Lady Macbeth. It is an intensely powerful drama of an uneasy conscience, and of the rentless and remorseless forces pursuing those who follow evil ways. Lady Macbeth knows no rest, and Macbeth hears vioces cryiag *Macbeth doth murder sleep.*

● A play of swift and unceasing action, it is one of the most stirring and poetical plays in the world's drama; and it shows us many, many times, that though the mills of God grind slowly, yet they grind exceeding small.

● These are some of the qualities of the great play now in our hands. We will discuss all the other and many more but let us see first of all what is 'drama,' how it began and how it developed.

SECTION I

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

DRAMA

1. Definition of Drama. The term 'drama' has been defined by various critics from time to time in various words. Frances Anne Kemble, for example, defines the terms as a *looking glass in which we see the hideousness of vice and beauties of virtue*. Cicero defines it as "a copy of life, a mirror of custom and a reflection of truth," and so on. The fact is that the term *drama* is so deep in its significance and so wide in its scope that each of its attempted definitions stands conflicting with its true import and we are at last compelled to grasp its implications through explanation rather than definitions. As to the meaning of the word 'drama', there can be, happily, no disagreement. It has been derived from a Greek word which means *to do*. This marks it once and for all as *the art of expression by action*. As the verb is to other parts of speech, so is drama in its relation to other arts. It employs them. It depends upon them to complete its purpose because abstract action is inconceivable. It should be remembered that it is only when there is something *done* with *subject* and *object*, that there can be what we call *drama*. The term may conveniently be described as a composition *in prose or poetry, accommodated to action, and intended to portray life or character or tell a story by actions and usually by dialogue tending toward some result directly based upon them*. 'Drama' may also be understood to signify *a set of events having the unity and progress of a play and leading to catastrophe or consummation*. Thus, the term 'drama' conveys the sense of *an art* through which *ideas* about *life* are expressed in an *artful manner*. It expresses *human sentiments* in *human language*. When a drama succeeds in copying *nature* and in *instructing life*, it climbs to its supreme magnificence. Briefly it may be described as a *mirror of life* presenting a true reflection of internal and external conflicts. To grasp the full significance

of the term 'drama' we should try to have a glimpse of its origin at this stage. We must have a clear idea of how it originated and how it developed to adopt the present form in which we find it to-day.

2. **Origin of Drama.** The desire to give expression to our feelings is a natural instinct. The expression is, thus, a part of human nature. *Gestures* and *speech* are the mediums through which a man expresses his thoughts and emotions. On joyous occasions the 'gesture' takes the form of *dance* and the speech that of *song*. *Imitation* which is also one form of expression, is an instinctive characteristic of the human being. The 'imitation' gives us greatest pleasure from our childhood to our death. Gesture and speech serve as the vehicles of expression as well as of imitation. The 'origin' of drama may thus be traced back to the very nature of human beings. Gesture and speech helped by *dress* cary the instinctive manifestations of feeling a bit further. *The drama may be said to have originated in the imitation of action of another aided by gesture, speech and dress.* As a matter of fact, all drama was originally confined to the assumption of the character of some other person. The history of drama amply reveals this fact. As time passed on the drama gathered various laws and rules round it and now an artistic piece of drama requires to be strictly regulated by the conventional laws and rules built up by the critics from time to time. We shall examine them in detail at some proper occasion in the following pages.

3. **A Copy of Life.** We will be able to grasp the full meaning of the term 'drama' by studying its various characteristics. One thing might have become clear by the above discussion, and it is that the true aim of a dramatist should be to provide in his compositions *a maximum possible faithful reproduction of human life and its conflicts*. From that we come to the conclusion that the drama should be *an imitation of life* dealing with the basic factors of life itself and theses factors are those that create the *conflicts of wills and ideas*, etc. The point of 'conflict' will be dealt with later. Here it is necessary for

us to examine those elements that differentiate the 'dramatic' from the 'non-dramatic.' A clue to the essential elements of drama has to be found out first. It is furnished by the opening clause of the most famous of all definitions of tragedy put forward by Aristotle. Tragedy, according to Aristotle, is *an imitation of an action.* Though the term imitation has provoked a dozen of interpretations and innumerable controversies, the modern student may take 'imitation' to mean *representation*. In other words, drama is not to be taken as 'life' itself but as the 'representation' of life, Not a real event, but the representation of a real (or an imagined) event is the essence of drama.

It must, however, be remembered that the *definition of 'drama' as the 'imitation of an action' is not nearly so sound. "Expression by action" would be much nearer the mark.* Drama need not—in theory at any rate—be cenfined to imitatlon, A real action may be devised as drama and become so.

Anyhow, the theory of imitation plays an important part in the drama. In terms of this theory, the true aim of a dramatist should be to provide on the stage a maximum possible faithful reproduction of a scene which has either actually taken place or conceived in a way which makes it thoroughly lifelike.

Victor Hugo insists on drama being a *focussing mirror,* when alone it can be, in his opinion, put in the category of an art. Drama as an art will be complete from all aspects if only the stage cares to present things as they ought to be.

4. **Illusion.** Some critics say that the success of a play should be judgded by the degree to which its performance leads us to believe that what we see acted before us is not a representation but an actual scene from real life itself. *The stage is supposed to delude the spectators and to produce a strong illusion of reality in their minds.* This illusion should not be destroyed by the introduction of unnaturel dialogue, characters, etc., and the atmosphere of

the drama should be so built with the help of various factors, such as scenes, acting, etc., that *the audience should feel themselves as being one of the characters appearing on the stage.* The merit of a dramatist lies in his power of inducing the audience to incline themselves to what Coleridge describes as "*a willing suspension of disbelief.*" This effect can be achieved only when minute observation of the real life is artistically represented in a most natural manner.

5. **The Element of Reality**. If drama is taken as an '*art*' we will have to admit that *art is never the photographic reproduction of everyday life.* It implies *selection, intensification* and *illusion*. Everything in the theatre is utterly unreal from start to finish, if by unreal we mean unlike life outside. Happily, this is not the true meaning of the word. *Art has its own reality, a manifold reality, more satisfying ultimately than the casual reality of everyday life.* Children, primitive people and highly-cultured people never demand of drama that it shall have this *literal reality*. It is only the half-civilized who are bothered when they do not find it. The Greek theatre and the Elizabethan theatre, two great peaks in the dramatic activity of man, hardly attempted realism at all. It was not only that each presented plays under conditions which made realism impossible. It was that neither was interested in it. Their interests lay elsewhere in the *world of values*. They were concerned with what happened to the *inner* man and woman, not to the outer world. They were not concerned with that imitation of contemporary life which is, to many people, the only sort of serious drama they can understand. Nor were they concerned with providing that *escape* from the problems of contemporary life, contrived in apparently realistic terms so as to make it plausible, which satisfies so many more. As a matter of fact, a play which aims at the *realistic portrayal* of any particular phase of contemporary life or in which historical accuracy is intrinsically important must be able to satisfy *technical criticism* on its own grounds. Again, *to present even a realistic play methods, the reverse of realistic and natural, have to be used in order to convey to an audience the desired realistic and natural effect.*

6. Conflict. The essence of drama is *conflict*; whether it be a *conflict of ideas or of individuals*, it is always represented through *characters*. When the characters struggle against an *irremovable object*, the drama is called *a tragedy*, when they struggle against a *removable object* the drama is called *a comedy*. When they struggle against a *ridiculous objeet*, the drama is called *a farce*. These rough definitions are subject to one qualification, essential in the case of tragedy, and valuable even in farce. It is that the chief characters must have a freedom of choice. If it is not so the drama is almost meaningless, and we should be mere ghouls peering into a torture chamber. Brunetiere says: "In drama or farce, what we ask of the theatre, is *the spectacle of a 'will' striving towards a goal*." Thus, drama is in the words of Archer, "a represntation of the will of *man in conflict* with mysterious powers of natural forces which limit or belittle us." Arthur Jones is also of the opinion that "Drama arises when any person or persons in a play are consciously or unconsciously '*up against some antagonistic person, or circumstances, or fortune*,' It must, however, be borne in mind that the conflict, whatever it is, must arise out of, or be intensified by, the essential nature of the chief character or charaters.

7. The Element of Surprise. The element of *sudden surprise* or *surprising suddenness*, as it may be called, is the main element in the works of dramatic value. What we describe as being 'dramatic' in our daily life, must essentially have the quality of causing us an *unexpected shock*. The unexpectedness arising out of a sudden event *is the essential significance of* the word *dramatic*; the dramatic shock referred above may be occasioned by some strange coincidence. It may also be occasioned by the "departure of the incidents narrated from the ordinary tenor of daily life." The audienee have always in their minds an overshadowing sense of *strong expectation* of witnessing some strange, unexpected and shocking incident at every turn of drama. The element of surprise in Shakespeare's *Macbeth* has to be examined more closely. We are shocked at every turn of the play by sudden and unexpected discoveries and occurrences in the course of the progress of the main story.

8. The Audience. *The chief point of distinction* between the drama and other forms of art is that a dramatic production has to keep *a regard for the presence of the audience.* Even if a drama displays all the basic qualities necessary to make it a masterpiece, it fails in its fundamental purpose if it ignores the audience. As a matter of fact, *a play without the conception of the presence of an audience is no play at all.* Painting, literature, poetry and fiction all are various forms of art. Painting expresses the feeling through drawing and colour, literature ventilates thought through words, poetry expresses emotions through rhythmic movement while fiction expresses through the medium of the story. *The drama may be described as the art of expression through the medium of a story interpreted by means of action on the stage before the audience.* Thus, the drama has to include the actors as well as the audience. The merely written or printed work of literature can never be classified as drama unless it fulfills the above conditions. Apart from that there are fixed rules prescribed for drama. It must, for example, confine itself within a period not more than three hours, but the most essential condition fixed for a drama is that it should be produced with an aim that it should be acted before an audience assembled together at one place.

9. The theatrical element. Drama is, thus, purposely written for performance on the stage in a theatre before an audience and, therefore, *the theatrical element occupies an important position in the drama.* No doubt a printed drama may be read and may also be enjoyed by the aid of imagination but what gives a sense of *completeness* to a drama is its performance in a theatre. When we set ourselves to judge the merits of a drama we keep both aspects in view—we consider its *literary worth* as well as its *theatrical quality.* That dramatic production which stands supreme with its literary beauties and theatrical excellence is always regarded as a *dramatic masterpiece* and such productions are *rare.* We will come across many dramas which are 'poetically' lacking but are, at the same time, 'theatrically' surpassing.

The melodramas usually suffer from lack of style and characterisation and although when they are acted on

the stage they excite the sympathy and interest of the audience, yet they cannot be adjudged as 'perfect' because they fail to fulfil the above essential requirements. About Marlowe's *Tamburlaine* it may be declared that though it is glorious in its literary qualities it lacks almost all the *theatrical graces,* and cannot, therefore, be put in the category of the masterpiece dramatic productions. As a play is primarily intended to be performed, the theatrical quality demands our closer attention. We must judge how far the dramatist has succeeded in stimulating our sympathies and interest on the stage.

To make a dramatic production a permanent masterpiece like some of the outstanding plays of Shakespeare, two qualities are therefore essential. (1) *Poetry*—a poetry that is characteristic as fine *lyricism* which makes an actor feel at home in his role and (2) *The theatrical element*—the element that makes it *suitable* for representation on the stage.

10. What is Drama? The above discussion is enough to bring into the limelight the various aspects of drama. We know that drama is an *art* by itself and that it differs from the arts of fiction, painting, poetry, etc. We have also examined the various essential elements of drama and may now safely proceed further to go into deeper details about this art-form. It is, however, beneficial to sum up the whole discussion here at this stage in a compressed form. *Drama may roughly be defined as the art of expressing ideas, feelings and emotions about life and its conflicts in such a manner that the said expression may conveniently be interpreted by the actors through proper gestures, and may, by suitably devised artifices of portraying the situation, arouse interest among the audience gathered to witness the play spoken and acted on the stage.* Now we will proceed further to discuss the various other problems of drama raised by complicated literary traditions and solved out by the critics of literature.

11. The Purpose of Drama. One of such problems is whether the drama should or should not have a *moral* be-

hind it. We see that some plays are entertaining while others are *serious*. *A farce* makes us *laugh* heartily while a *tragedy deepens our view* of life so that we are stimulated to think and ponder upon the significance of things around us more seriously. Now the question arises whether drama should *aim* at merely providing us some *amusement* or it should give us something *more* than that. One school of critics maintains that it is absolutely *unnecessary* for drama to *aim at morality*. Moliere is a prominent figure of this school of thought. The other school believes that the main aim of drama is to *delight and teach*. Ben Jonson and Dryden belong to this school of critics.

When we study drama with a view to discover the truth lying at the bottom of the controversy referred above we come to the conclusion that the *real dramatic masterpieces do never keep any definite aim* in view and that deliberate *preaching* in drama *spoils* it altogether. No doubt we come across certain good plays, like *Ghosts*, produced by Ibsen, which deliberately teach a certain lesson or aim to convey a certain moral, but such occasional and incidental productions cannot go far to rule out the fact that *art loses its grace and dignity when it plunges into the field of deliberate preaching. A really good comedy like a tragedy naturally supplies us some tessons without, at the same time, aming to preach.* Goethe declares, "If a poet has as high a soul as Sophocles, his influence will always be moral, let him do what he will." This claim clarifies the whole position. It proves beyond doubt that *a true masterpice does not aim at teaching and yet it does teach.*

SOME RULES OF DRAMA

Apart from the classical laws of drama, namely, 'The Three Unities' examined hereafter, there are some rules which every good dramatist has to keep in his mind while writing a drama. These rules may be stated as follows. It should, however, be remembered that none of these rules should be strictly *imposed* upon the talents of the dramatist. Restrictions like these may only *arrest* the progress of drama and *suffocate* the qualities and calibre of a dramatist. The only thing which a dramatist

is required to keep in his mind is, in the words of Dr. Johnson, that he should "neither *voilate* essential principles by a desire of novelty, nor *debar* himself from the attainment of beauties within his view, by needless fear of breaking rules which no literary dictator had authority to enact."

1. Judicious Selection of Subject. The foremost condition for a dramatist is that he should *choose his subject judiciously* and should have a *perfect hold upon* it. The judicious selection is necessary because all actions are *not* equally interesting to form the theme of a drama. Only such subjects should be chosen which are *capable of being dramatised*. The dull incidents which cannot be treated dramatically should be excluded. Side by side with the skill of selection, the *command* and *grip* over the subject should be such that the dramatic element may play a prominent role.

2. Power to Handle and Organize Material. The dramatist should essentially possess a power to *organize* the scattered incidents and *to weave* them together into a *complete whole*. It is this power of transforming and transmuting a baser material into gold which makes the dramatist present an ordinary thing in such a way that it may give us *supreme joy*. This quality gives *beauty* to a common thing. It is this *vitalizing power* which gave Shakespeare that quality which may be described as the *magic touch*. The original subject is always incoherent in its nature and the skill of a playwright is judged by assessing as to how far he has been successful in producing a *finished* and *polished* piece.

3. Stage Considerations. A playwright has necessarily to keep in his view the *stage* while selecting and dealing with his subject. He has to consider how to expose his subject in such a manner that it may be able to be *acted potentially* on the stage. A play may be a masterpiece of literature but it may, at the same time, lack the *theatrical quality*. A dramatist has to keep a number of things in his mind. Shakespeare kept the *stage and its requirements*

in his mind while writing plays and it was on account of this reason that his plays are much better than those written by literary men like Coleridge, Shelley, Tennyson and Browning. Moliere, Pinero and Ibsen were like Shakespeare connected with the stage. Their dramatic productions reveal this fact.

4. Element of Reality. A playright must be mindful of dealing with the situations and incidents in such a way that they may appear *natural*. He has to take *real situations* and build them up by the help of *natural dialogue and characters* in such a way that the *element of probability* is *strengthened rather than sacrificed*. It is not expected that *crude truth* and *accurate reality* should be *exactly* jotted down in a play, yet the art would be faulty if the illusion of reality is *damaged*. Appropriate dialogue should be allotted to the various characters. The speech of a sinner should not be put into the mouth of a saint. The same is the case with action. There should be some difference between the behaviour of a rogue and a 'priest.' A good play has always a *fidelity to the truth* of human nature and this fidelity in the structure of a play is basically important. A play should accurately describe the life of the age and the period represented by it. It will be absurd if the social and scientific conditions of the twentieth century are *transfixed* in an action laid in the sixteenth century. The dress, the etiquette, the ideology, etc., should be represented with perfect regard to the period and the social conditions aimed to be depicted in the play. Thus the *local colour should be true to the subject and the structure of the play*.

5. Person on the Stage. Another rule lays down the limit of persons appearing on the stage *at one time*. It demands that not more than three speaking persons should appear on the stage at one and the same time. This restriction puts a heavy shackle on the dramatist. There is no doubt that if a *multitude* of people will begin speaking on the stage at one and the same time *nobody will be heard* clearly and there will be *chaos* on the stage. It must, however, be declared that there are occasions when the number of speaking persons have to be *necessarily* increased to achieve a definite purpose. On such occasions this rule

has to be put aside. It follows that the dramatist should *not be tightly tied down* to such minor restrictions as this rule lays down.

6. The Acts. Critics have laid down a general condition that a play should consist of *five Acts*. This number should neither increase nor decrease. It is true that the dramatists of the past have, to a great extent, produced plays falling in line with this condition but when we throw a glance over the modern dramatic productions we find that this restriction has been *set aside* by dramatists like Bernard Shaw and Galsworthy, etc. As a matter of fact, this rule does not appear sound. Even the plays spreading over three Acts only produce as successful and even more agreeable results. To insist that a dramatist *must* produce a play consisting of neither more nor less than five Acts is unreasonable.

7. Practicability. An important rule, which has to be taken into account, is that the dramatist should always take care to put on the stage only such things which *can be easily performed*. As the first purpose of a play is that it should be *acted* on the stage before an *audience*, therefore *nothing of a sort which may make action on the stage impossible should be introduced*. These restrictions should not, however, be taken so strictly as to be let to *tell upon the talents* of a dramatist and he should be free to display his faculties subject to the condition that he does not violate the fundamental requirements of a drama.

THE LAWS OF DRAMA

It will be much beneficial to first throw a glance on the various laws of drama and then to discuss them in detail. Briefly speaking, the rules of Drama, as laid down by Aristotle, insist that three unities must be observed.

The Unities. The drama being a form of *art*, it has its *own rules* like the rules of other forms of art and these rules have been evolved, developed and crystallized by experience and conventions into *laws* which have to be observed and abided by every dramatist. Many laws and rules of

drama have *flexibility* to regulate the various technical aspects of different types of drama. Every type of drama is governed by a *different set of rules*. Certain conventions have to be determined by the *requirements of staging* and by the *technical devices* to be adopted for *impressive* and *proper* performance of drama on the theatrical stage. Several other considerations have also to be taken into account in the process of application of certain laws and rules. There are, however, some rules which have continued to be followed *invariably* from ancient times down to the present day. The three unities are the unities of *time*, *place* and *action*. These three unities were originated with a view *to produce an illusion of reality* on the stage.

1. **The Unity of Time.** The convention of the unity of time requires that the time taken in the representation of a play on the stage must *coincide* with and be *equal* to the time of the action of the play itself. As we know, an average play takes about *three hours* for stage-performance and what is demanded by this unity is that the events, incidents, etc., of the original story or action of the play should not occupy a period more than three hours in their actual exposition.

2. **The Unity of Place.** The rules of this convention demand that *each scene* of the play must be *so located* that the *dramatis personae* may conceivably be *able to visit it within the time fixed for the performance of the play* on the stage. It requires that the whole action of the play should, as far as possible, be laid in *one place*. It implies that there should be *no constant and violent* shifting of scene from one place to another far situated place. The reason for imposing this restriction is that such shifting would shatter the concentration of the audience and would *spoil the 'unity of impression.'*

3. **The Unity of Action.** The unity of action has been universally recognised as being the *most essential* principle of the construction of drama. It requires that all the characters and scenes should properly contribute to the *main action* of the play. It implies that no irrelevant or unnecessary characters and scenes should be introduced

in the play and there should be neither any important sub-plots nor the admixture of tragedy and comedy to *spoil the unity of impression.*

A CRITICAL SUMMARY OF THE LAWS OF UNITY

The study of the attitudes of dramatists towards the rules relating to time, place, and action reveals that the 'Romantics' generally ignore the first two unities. As a matter of fact, there are many reasons which go a great way *to build up a case* against the unities of time and place. Some of them are examined below :—

(1) The rules regulating and restricting time, if observed and adhered to strictly, often lead to absurdity because when we accept the twenty-four hours' theory of time *we fail to produce a successful tragedy.* As we know, the maximum period allotted to the act of the play is twenty-four hours, while the *tragedy often deals with the ups and downs in a man's fortune and life* which if represented as having occurred in *one* day, it would *never sound plausible* because although they may possibly appear in one day, to believe that they occurred within that period only does not appear probable. So is the case with the comedy too. *It cannot be believed in comedy that a love affair may begin and be consummated within the brief period of twenty-four hours.* The process is too complicated.

(2) To bind down the dramatist by the imposition of restrictions upon his liberty of choice of *the action* of the play is improper and highly disadvantageous because the usurpation of the freedom of the dramatist is *to arrest the progress of drama.* As a matter of fact, a dramatist should be given full scope to work on the matter in his hand in any form which may suit him. He should be given complete liberty for chosing the play. Shakespeare has produced such dramas in which he has strictly abided by the laws of unity. *The Tempest* is the best example of such plays. In the majority of his plays Shakespeare has ignored these laws.

These examples go to prove a long way that it should be left to the dramatist to freely adopt that form for his material which may suit him best.

(3) The observing of unities leads to one more disadvantage and it is that the dramatist has to ***narrow his imagination.*** He is left with very few plots. The *time rule* compels a dramatist to dismiss many beautiful incidents that can happen in two or three days. The dramatist is bound to confine himself to the events happening in twenty-four hours only and this is quite unnatural.

(4) There are certain plays in which the rules of unities are inapplicable. It may, however, be admitted that in most of the cases the restrictions with regard to *time and place* are useful. They may aid the dramatist in his task to some extent by obliging him *to compress* his material and concentrate on most *striking* elements. Such a compression and concentration may help him to put in *greater dramatic effect* in his plots. It cannot be denied that in most of the cases the events extending over a long stretch of time *lose that dramatic wonder and excitement* which is the first and foremost of drama. Details are always *dull* and *unexciting* and the restriction of time may *guarantee to safeguard* the dramatic element. The same is the case with the restriction of place. Constant and frequent shifting of scenes may only cause disintegration of interest and disturbance of balance rather than provide a sense of absorbtion in the mind.

(5) The unities of *time and place* appear to be *illogical.* Those critics who are in favour of these unities advance the argument that the shifting of the scenes from one place to another destroys the illusion of reality formed in the minds of the spetcators. Now this argument seems to be *bottomless* because the human imagination is *too agile* and if the grand shifting of scene, that is, the first rising of the curtain at the opening of the drama does not cause any damage to the illusion of reality, there is no reason why the subsequent shiftings should in any way spoil that illusion. Just a little before the first rise of the curtain we are sitting in the theatre smoking a cigarette, the next minute, when the curtain rises, we find ourselves with the characters of the play in some remoter country or place. *As our imagination can carry us in one second from the theatrical hall to that far country, there seems to be no reason at all why*

the same power of imagination would stick to keep us at the place where it had deluded us to be at the opening of the play and would not help us dive again into the same kind of delusion at the subsequent shiftings of the scenes. Thus the unities of time and place canot stand from this point of view.

(6) The school of the Romantic dramatists stands in partial protest against the *unity of action*. As we know, the rules of this unity require that *no sub-plots* should be introdueed in a play because they tend to destroy the *singleness of impression*. The *romantic dramatists* have produced several plays which contain sub-plots and yet these plays possess all the artistic charms required for a successful dramatic production. Some of the romantic dramatists present the comedy and tragedy *blended together* in one play and yet they have succeeded in keeping the *organic connection* between the various parts of the play. It implies that the dismissal of the requirements of the unity of action can do no harm at all *provided* due care is taken to set everything in the action in such a manner that it may form a link in *a single chain of cause and effect* and all things in a play may *centralise* at one point.

(7) The *unity of action* prohibits the *mixing* of mirth and sorrow in the action of a single play because comedy and tragedy are two quite *different* literary types and, therefore, the blending of the two together in one and the same play snatches away all charm and effect from it. Addison criticises such blending in his journal, the *Spectator*, as being "one of the most *monstrous inventions*." Critics like Addison forget that there is *diversity* in nature itself and as the drama is 'a mirror of nature' the same diversity must reflect itself in that 'mirror' too. It follows that the condition regarding the watertight separation of tragedy and comedy, imposed by the 'unity of action,' is *unsound*.

THE PRESENT CONCEPTION OF UNITIES

The present-day critics have realised that the art needs *fuller liberty* for its manifestation and that it is *erroneous* to bind down the artist in the shackles of conventions. He

should be provided *wider scope* and *liberty of choice.* They put a *different construction* on the old laws and rules governing various forms of art. The rule regarding the introduction of sub-plots in the framework of a single play has been interpreted by the Romantic dramatists and critics as demanding an *organic rather than a single plot.* Thus the unity now does not stand for the singleness of action as it was understood to stand in the past but for an organic *link* among various parts of a play. The introduction of sub-plots or *subsidiary action* has been legitimatised, subject to the condition that these plots or actions should be kept as *subordinate* and subsidiary to the main plot or action. The *central thread* should be so run through the various subordinate plots or actions that the *interest should remain focussed on the central theme.* Shakespeare has produced a lot of plays containing two sub-plots. In the *Merchant of Venice* we find even three plots running side by side. The supreme merit or skill of Shakespeare lies in the fact that he has come out successful in achieving *unity through complexity* and diversity of structure and action. Although the intricacy of his plots in *Macbeth, King Lear* and *Winter's Tale* is almost bewildering, these plays have been so skilfully built up that the unity of impression has not been injured in any way.

THE FIVE DIVISIONS OF THE PLOT

As we have seen earlier Aristotle suggested a model for a play. It was to consist of *five divisions or stages.* These five divisions have been marked out by Aristotle *with special regard to the various stages of the rise and fall of the conflict which a drama is required to deal with.* A dramatic story does always treat with *conflict* and the development of dramatic plot is in fact the development of that conflict. The first stage is that of the *opening* of the conflict. Aristotle gave it the technical name of *expression.* Then the conflict develops further and enters the second stage. This process is called *the rising action.* The conflict continues to grow till it reaches the most *intense point* and that stage is known as the *climax.* From this point the plot takes a *decisive turn.* It is from this stage that the events begin to move *down-*

ward and the story creeps towards its end. This stage is called *the falling action.* Just after that comes the last stage—the *Conclusion* or *Catastrophe*—at which the fate of the hero or the central characters who were entangled in the conflict referred above, is finally decided. Now we will examine each of these five stages of the dramatic plot more closely.

1. **The Exposition.** The *exposition* aims at *supplying all the necessary information* to the audience about the *background* of the conflicts treated in the play. The opening scenes of a drama give all the *explanatory matter* which is deemed by the dramatist as being necessary for the audience to understand the play more properly. This stage of the drama is most *difficult* because great skill and art is needed to attract the attention of the audience to the main theme in such a manner that the information may be conveyed to them *without burdening their minds.* When the 'exposition' is found to lack the power of attraction the audience are bored, and instead of taking full advantage of drawing the said information they feel *repulsion.* The *direct statement* of the introductory material usually results in the above phenomenon. *Narration* of that information spoils the 'exposition.' From the very beginning the dramatist has to take the help of *action.* Shakespeare's *Tempest* contains 'exposition' in a narrative form. This 'exposition' occurs in the second scene of the drama. It is not so attractive as the 'exposition' of *Hamlet,* which occurs in the first scene of that play. The reason is that, in *Hamlet,* Shakespeare evolves out the 'exposition' through *allusion and action* rather than narration. As a matter of fact, narration is proper for the *novel and not the drama.*

2. **The Rising Action.** Just after the first stage of the 'exposition' of the background of the plot, the second and *more complicated* stage comes. The skill of a dramatist lies in his ability *to evolve out the events into the 'rising action' out of the 'exposition' itself* in such a manner that they may appear to have naturally *grown out* of it. There should be a natural connection and a deep relation between these two stages. The action and character should

be *well-knitted* together. All those elements of the conflict which are going to play an important part in the 'crisis' should be *fully stressed and emphasized* at this juncture. The various parts of the play should be so related together that they may form an organic whole.

3. **Crisis.** The conflict exposed in the first and rising in the second stage has to be *brought to a head* in the third. This stage is called the *climax* or the *crisis* of conflict. It is highly necessary for a climax of the play to *grow out* of the two foregoing stages. It should be a *natural* and *logical* outcome of the 'rising action' and *should have capacity of being interpreted in the light of the first scene.* The nature of the characters and the circumstances exposed in the first scene must *justify* the event occurring at the 'crisis.' *There are no hard and fast rules as to where the crisis should be placed.* In the plays of Shakespeare we find the climax occurring in the middle of the action. Shakespeare usually put it in the *third Act.*

4. **The Falling Action.** Soon after the conflict has climbed up into a crisis, it *falls down* gradually. If the play is to be a *tragedy*, the *misery* and *misfortune* of the losing party *enhance* further, but if it is to be a *comedy* all the *troubles* and *complexities* created by the intensification of the conflict in the 'crisis' are *vanished.* The greatest problem before a dramatist in the stage of 'falling action' is *to maintain the interest* of the audience *after the climax.* As soon as the climax is over and the 'fall' begins the interest of the audience is usually lessened. The skill of a good dramatist lies in his faculty of keeping our interest *alive* till the very end of the play. The successful modern dramatists employ the device of *taking the 'rising action' and the 'climax' nearer to the falling action and reducing the latter as far as possible* so that the fall may not be felt by the audience.

5. **The Conclusion.** The dramatic conflict passing through various stages explained above is *brought to a close in the conclusion.* It is here, at this stage, that all the lines of dramatic story are *gathered together* and the play is given *final touches.* The 'conclusion' should be such that

it may give the sense of *completeness* and *finality rather than abrupt ending.* In a *tragic* conclusion the principal character of the play is either *killed* or *miserably disappointed* while 'the conclusion' in a *comedy* is *happier* for him. There is another type of conclusion as well. It occurs in *tragi-comedies.* In such conclusions the *main action is tragic* to a high degree but the *conclusion is not altogether dark* and gloomy.

THE TECHNICAL ASPECT OF DRAMA

On analysis of the action of a play *four* important elements may be discovered which help in the building up of its *structure.* These elements are : (1) Fable or *Plot*, (2) *Dramatis personae* or *Characters*, (3) Diction or *Dialogue* and (4) Occasionally *Asides* and *Soliloquies.* The last mentioned element is *seldom* used in the modern dramas yet as it has been used by the dramatists by way of subsidiary factor, therefore, along with the other elements, we will discuss it too. A complete analysis of each element mentioned above is given below.

1. Fable or Plot. As the drama tells a *story* through dialogue, the *plot* becomes essential for it. No drama can exist without a plot of some kind. It does not mean that the chief interest also rests on the plot. As a matter of fact, a plot is of *little value in our judgment of a drama.* The *characters* and the *dialogue* attract us *more* than the *underlying plot.* We are interested in the heroic figure of 'Hamlet' more than the plot of that play. The words spoken by the hero and the physical action on the stage are the chief factors from which we derive our interest. The action may be less in some types of tragedies and comedies but it *cannot be eliminated altogether.* There must be some *action* to serve as a medium of conveying the dramatist's material to the audience. Side by side with elements which may appeal to the minds of the spectators, there must be employed some devices to appeal *directly* to the *eye* itself. The skill of a dramatist lies in finding an *appropriate* plot that may be unfolded in the theatre by the help of such physical action which may carve out *wider* and *deeper* impressions upon the minds of the audience. In this respect the plot of a play is totally different from that

of a *novel.* No limit has been put on the length of the novel. The novelist enjoys absolute freedom to convey his material without regard to any unities of time, place and action. It is not binding upon him to produce such a work which may be read at a single sitting. The only thing which is expected from a novelist is that he must present his material in such a style that the interest of the readers should continue to enhance at every new chapter. The play on the other hand should only be of such a length that it may not take more time than that of a single *sitting.* This time-limit is most essential because after some time it becomes impossible for the audience to undergo more physical strain caused by sitting at one place in the theatrical hall. The plot should be brief because the audience cannot endure sitting too long. In order to achieve brevity the dramatist has to *control his material.* He has to reject unessential and irrelevant elements from his plot. Some critics like Fretag have laid down the limit of lines to strike brevity. A five Act play, in Fretag's opinion, should not exceed two thousand lines in all. This restriction is not *legitimate* because under such a condition no truly artistic results can be achieved. Shakespeare's *Hamlet* contains three thousand, nine hundred and thirty-one lines and yet it is considered as one of the chosen masterpieces of Shakespeare. The brevity of the plot is largely achieved by keeping the *stage conditious* in view. The stage setting and the scenery, etc., eliminate the necessity of giving verbal descriptions of a large number of things which have to be necessarily described in detail in a novel. Even when the dramatist has got compressed material for his plot, he has to employ his skill in its *proper arrangement.* The comparison of the old and modern plays shows that as against the old plays the modern contain only few outstanding points or a number of minor scenes rather than expensive and drawn-out material. The history plays of Shakespeare do particularly suffer from the looseness ef structure, yet it must be admitted to his advantage that he possesses the ability of disposing of and arranging his compressed material in a *copious measure.*

2. The 'Dramatis Personae' or Characters. For the expression of the material of the plot, characters serve as essential media. It is a matter of common sense that *unless there are characters who make certain things happen, no story can be possibly built up*. Some critics believe that as the main concern of a stage is with the *action*, therefore the characterisation should be allotted a *subordinate* place in a play. This opinion is *erroneous*, for if a play is to be a piece of art it must provide action which may help the *development of character*. The plot may be declared to be just a *graph* within which the characters of the various *dramatis personae* are *evolved out*. With the unfolding of the plot on the stage the audience should come to have a *vivid idea* of the characters. The fundamental *nature and temperaments* of the main characters play an important role in building up the plot. The *interplay* of characters is essential for the onward progress of a play. All the artistic plays stand not on their plots but on account of the stock of *human psychology* that they present. The plays of Shakespeare live today because there is a close study of the *human mind* in them. It does not mean that plot is altogether ineffective in a play. The point to be remembered is that the part played by the characterisation in a play is also most important. The main story of a play has to be carried forward without stopping for giving a conscious analysis of the characters as is done in a novel. As a matter of fact, the chief *difference* between a novel and drama is that the novelist has liberty to portray the characters by means of *deliberate commentary and analysis*, while the dramatist is compelled to give a *few scenes and incidents* which may bring the various aspects of the characters into the *limelight*. The dramatist has to lay emphasis on those qualities only without which he cannot do and which cast an *influence on the course of action* itself, No doubt Shakespeare possessed great skill in the field of characterisation but he is sometimes uneconomical and a bit uncontrolled. In *Hamlet*, for example, he put in more material than is absolutely necessary for the role of the prince in the plot of the play. Thus, concentration and judicious selection of materials is highly necessary qualities for a dramatist to possess. Apart from that the

art of characterisation demands a high standard of *impartiality*. While building up characters the dramatist has to keep himself detached completely. He has to *stand aside*, and draw the character impartially. Shapespeare stands supreme in this respect. *His sympathies lie asleep* when he builds up the characters. Without taking sides he brings the strong as well as the weak point into the limelight.

3. Diction or Dialogue. Mere action and characters without the Dialogue cannot go to make the play. The details of characterisation can only be conveyed satisfactorily through *dialogue* because unless we are acquainted with the *basic conflict* the whole exhibition on the stage will appear meaningless. *The motives, passions, the mental struggles, and the feelings of the characters are more important to the audience than mere jumping about on the stage.* The atmosphere of suspense is essential in the progress of a play and the suspense cannot be artistically built up without the help of *intensifying factors* like the dialogue. A quarrel on the stage will look funny *if its reasons are unknown*. The thoughts and feelings of the persons quarrelling on the stage are more important than the quarrel and for the expression of these thoughts and feelings there can be no better medium than the dialogue. A novelist may keep his characters silent and come forward to speak for them but *a dramatist cannot substitute himself for his characters*. He cannot take the aid of commentary and analysis. *His characters must speak*. In psychological plays there is little action and more dialogue. In such plays the dialogue is a *part* of the action itself. The story moves forward beneath the talk which supplies clues to the characters of the *dramatis personae*. The dialogue serves the purpose of *commentary* on the conduct of characters of the plays. It presents not only a self-portrait but also the portraits of other characters. Remarks about the self and about the other characters taken together help in complete *psychoanalysis* of each person appearing in the play. The various situations, characters and feelings of persons supply us a valuable piece of cumulative evidenee necessary for judging the standard of the play. The dialogue should be *effective*. It should be condensed and brief. There should

be unity in the talk. All the irrelevant and unnecessary elements should be *expelled* from the dialogue. Every new word should be strictly relevant and appropriate. The style of speech of different characters must suit their respective nature and temperaments. In short, as the noble play depends upon the dialogue, therefore much *skill and care* should be employed in this respect.

4. Asides and Soliloquies. When one of a number of characters present on the stage expresses some thought taking only the audience and not the other characters in confidence, we call it the device of 'aside.' The 'soliloquy' is nothing but a *dramatic monologue.* A single character comes on the stage and begins to talk to himself. This 'thinking aloud' is represented by the old dramatists through 'soli oquy.' In 'soliloquy' the various thoughts, aims and objects of the character speaking on the stage are embodied. Only those thoughts are conveyed to the audience through these 'asides' and soliloquies which are deemed to be necessary for the audience to know. Briefly 'soliloquy' and 'aside' are the means employed by a dramatist to take us down into the *hidden corners* of the character and nature of the person. These are the artifices of revealing those *springs of conduct which fail to be adequately disclosed to the audience through the ordinary dialogue.* It must be remembered that the modern critics have raised serious objections against these devices of 'soliloquies' and 'asides'. Only a maniac likes to talk to himself and when a person is engaged in 'soliloquy' and 'aside' the whole thing appears to be *unnatural, funny* and *absurd.* No doubt the designs of a villain, the mischief which he wants to play, needs to be kept secret from all the characters in the play and to be disclosed to the audience *alone* by some device. The dramatist has *no liberty to narrate and describe the innermost ideas and intentions* of the characters and he is left with no other choice than to take the help of 'soliloquy' and 'aside.' The reason is that the mischievous intentions are *not shared with others.* The villainous plans and designs have to be formed and perfected in seclusion. The audience have to be taken into confidence. There is, therefore, no other way of doing so except by adopting the device of 'soliloquy'. In the Elizabethan and the Vic-

torian period these devices were commonly employed by the dramatists, Shakespeare used 'soliloquies' and 'asides' quite frequently in his plays.

ADDITIONAL DEVICES

Some dramatists introduce peculiar artistic devices of dramatic construction which we prefer to examine here. The plot, the dialogue, the characters are the fundamental features of the drama but the artistic principles of structural design discussed below are employed by playwrights to give greater effect to their themes.

1. **The Parallelism.** When the central idea at one part of the action is reintroduced in another part of it to illustrate and inforce the other, the device so employed is called 'parallelism'. This artifice is used for the purpose of achieving greater dramatic effect. Shakespeare has introduced such type of repetition in many of his plays. In his drama entitled *Twelfth Night* we mark a series of parallel loves in progress. The Duke loves Viola and Viola is loved by Olivia. Such type of repetition creates complications in the action no doubt but at the same time it does enhance the theatrical effectiveness. Moreover, it gives an organic unity to the various elements of the plots. The different parts of the play are knitted together by this device. Thus it provides a real tie of connection between the apparently disconnected portions of the play. In Shakespeare's *A mid-summer Night's Dream*, for example, the plot and the under-plot have been employed to achieve the purpose of dramatic effectiveness.

2. **The Contrast.** We know that the conflict is the basic element of a play. This conflict may be of persons, passions, interests or ideologies. From this conflict arises the 'contrast.' Thus the 'contrast' may be said to be a fundamental factor playing a basic role in the story of a play. The forces of virtue and evil move in direct contrast to each other. The lights and shades of happy and tragic circumstances through which a story winds its way is another example of contrast. The first part of a play-up

to the climax stands in direct contrast against the 'falling action' after the climax. The dramatist uses sometimes a comic underplot within the tragic plot and thus blending the serious with the comic scenes he produces greater dramatic effect through 'contrast.' In good plays, however, the 'contrast' appears in more artistic form. It is usually introduced in the character-scheme of the modern play. When each character is studied with reference to the rest of the characters it is found that the special temperamental qualities of each person stand in sharp contrast to those of the rest. In Shakespeare's Macbeth we find such sharp contrast.

3. The Dramatic Irony. The 'dramatic irony' is also used as a means of achieving effectiveness. The term signifies that effect which is produced by the marked difference in the significance of the actions and statements on the other. Such a difference arises when the characters act or speak in ignorance of important facts which are already in the knowledge of the audience.

4. The Element of Surprise. The elements of surprise and concealment arouse and keep alive the interest of the audience and therefore the dramatist introduces these elements in his play. Keeping the audience in suspense by holding back from them some essential particulars about motives, incidents or about the characters themselves he reveals them at such a time and occasion when their sudden disclosure may produce thrilling and deeper effect upon them. This device is employed in order to sustain the interest of the audience throughout the play. It must, however, be remarked that such thrilling means are adopted in sensational types of plays. In better types of plays we do not find such sensational surprises. Dramatists place all the forces working in the plot before the audience at the opening of the play. The interest is maintained by tactful touches in the course of gradual progress of action. In Macbeth, we know at the very outset what forces are working in the plot. The final result though slightly sensational is at the same time not much surprising because the evolution of various events justifies it.

KINDS OF DRAMA

The drama may be divided into two distinct kinds. Sad and serious plays are generally called 'tragedies' while the gay and bright plays are usually called 'comedies.' It must, however, be pointed out that all dark and serious plays are not tragedies in the real sense of the term. The same is the case with the other kind. All bright plays cannot be strictly defined as comedies. For the common type of tragedy the critics have reserved another term and it is "melodrama." In the same manner the common type of comedy is called a 'farce.' We shall now discuss these kinds of drama below in fuller detail.

1. Tragedy. Tragedy deals with adversity, sorrow or unhappiness of the exalted characters. Commonly the end of the play is taken as determining its kind. When the end of a plot is sad and dark it is supposed to be a tragedy. The theory that the fall of great personalities like monarchs, generals, etc., builds up a tragedy has been objected against by various critics. A tragedy may not necessarily end in death. As a matter of fact the position of characters or the end of the play do not go to make a tragedy. The whole impression must be dark in a tragic plot. Tragedies stir up our sympathies. The tragedy represents the conflict of a man, who has freely chosen an object too big for him to remove. He is defeated in terms of space-time. He wins in terms of eternity. Tragedy demands always a certain nobility of theme of character.

2. Comedy. Comedy deals with joy and mirth. It closes happily. According to some critics, in comedy the position of characters is humbler than that of those in a tragedy. The total impression in a comedy is light and bright. It does not tell upon our feelings and sympathies. Roughly speaking those plays can be declared to be comedies which present happy plots in gay and bright styles accompanied with laughter rather than tears.

3. Melodrama. The term 'melodrama' has been derived from the Greek word 'Melos,' meaning 'song'. It

originally signified the serious drama only. A number of lyrics were usually included in it but then gradually the 'melodrama' passed through many changes. Firstly, it tended to become more sensational in the course of time. Secondly, the writers of the 'melodrama' neglected the characterisation for the sake of mere effect and, thirdly, nothing but only song, show and incident began to form the 'melodrama' as it is available today. Thus the original seriousness of melodrama has altogether been replaced by what may be described as 'the musical exhibition of incidents.'

4. **The Farce.** The term 'Farce' has sprung up from the Latin word 'Farcio', meaning 'I stuff.' Hence the term farce applies to those dramas only which are packed and stuffed with cheaper type of humour and low wit of extravagant nature. This expression was commonly applied to shorter plays spreading over three Acts and characterised by cheaper wit. Such plays were distinct from the five Act plays chiefly due to their low humour. As time passed on the short humorous plays were described as 'farce.' In 'farce' we find no acute display of character or plot. It deals only with impossible comic incidents in an exaggerated style. There is, however, plenty of practical jokes in farcical dramas.

TYPES OF ENGLISH COMEDY

By the study of comedy and its development we come to discover some distinct types which need detailed discussion. The chief types of English comedy are five in number. They are farce, comedy of satire, comedy of intrigue, the comedy of romance and that of manner. All these types are discussed separately below.

1. **Farce.** Its character and dialogue depend on the 'situation' only. As exaggeration is the chief characteristic of farce, therefore it deals with impossible kinds of situation. In order to determine whether a certain play is more farcical than another, we have to keep the element of exaggeration in view. A play may be said to be

less farcical than another if the element of exaggeration is playing a less forceful role in its plot. Thus Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* is less farcical than the *Merry Wives of Windsor.* In the latter play the character has been sacrificed to the situation and exaggeration has been given a dominating role to play. In farce such practical jokes are included which rouse our laughter. These jokes are thus distinct from the remarks of wit and humour which confine themselves to stimulating an inward sense of thrills of pleasure.

2. Comedy of Satire. It was Ben Jonson who made this type of comedy very popular by producing *Every Man in his Humour.* In the comedy of satire every character possesses some degree of eccentricity. It is intensely realistic. Its satire is bitter and although such a bitterness is absent in humour yet this type of comedy is also called the comedy of humours. Exaggeration prevails over the comedy of humours but the nature of the exaggeration here in this type is doubtlessly realistic rather than fanciful.

3. Comedy of Intrigue. This type of comedy provokes laughter largely due to its intrigues, disguises and the complication of its plot and situations. Delicately conceived situations are skilfully set in such types of comedy. They lead to countless mistakes with amusing results. It has no horseplay or rough incidents as are found in 'farce,' The comedy of intrigue loses all interest as soon as the novelty of plot-development is exploded. It does in such cases become highly dull and monotonous.

4. Comedy of Romance. The comedy of romance works upon some broader principles than those of the 'farce' : as we know farce deals with exaggerated situations. It is the most debased type of comedy. The comedy of romance, on the other hand, belongs to the higher type. Shakespeare's plays entitled *As You Like It*, *Much Ado*, *Twelfth Night* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* may be categorised as the comedies of romance. This type of comedy is built up in a romantic atmosphere. They are situated in some remoter land away from the ordinary

atmosphere of cities. Its situations are developed in natural and romantic surroundings. The characters, too, bave a romantic nature to more or less degree. Its humour is soft and subdued. Its incidents are improbable and romantic and its style carries a poetical and whimsical appeal.

5. Comedy of Manner. The comedy of manner is satirical in its nature. It presents the conventions, manners and follies of an imaginary society and makes fun of those who strive to enter into it. In spite of the fact that it is satirical, it is not bitter. The wit is dominant over satire. It does not let the emotion prevail over its plot. In this sense it may be described as basically intellectual in its nature. In the eighteenth century Congreve and Etherege were the chief protagonists of this type of comedy. In the twentieth century Bernard Shaw and Synge wrote some comedies of manner.

TYPES OF ENGLISH TRAGEDY

We can determine the types of English tragedy by keeping in view the various developments in this field in the course of time. When we throw a glance over the development of drama from the earliest time up to the present day we find six prominent types of English tragedy. We begin with the Pre-Elizabethan period to assess the various types of English tragedy.

1. Pre-Elizabethan Tragedy. We already know that the drama in Greece served as a vehicle of religious propagation in the earlier stages. In England, too, drama was employed to serve the religious purposes. In the beginning we come across the Mystery and Miracle plays. During pre-Elizabethan period tragedy was taken to be that kind of drama in which the 'great' were shown to fall a target of adversity. It consequently consisted in the fall of the great personalities of the play. The classical dramatists in the pre-Elizabethan era observed the rules of the unities but the more popular playwrights ignored the classical conventions.

2. Marlovian Tragedy. Credit goes to Marlowe for establishing a well-refomed type of tragedy in English literature. In his works we discover for the first time conscious effort to give a definite form to tragedy. Marlowe did not only give it a shape but also a proper conception. He did not believe merely that tragedy consisted only in the fall of great personalities like kings, etc. He also valued the idea of individual merit in his heroic characters. His heroes are not invariably great. His hero Dr. Faustus was only an ordinary doctor. So was Barabas. He was only a money-lender. Marlowe shows some bold and ambitious characters coming into conflict with such forces as are beyond their powers of control and the ultimate defeat of these struggling spirits gives a deeper impression of sadness and tragedy. Marlowe employs blank verse in his plays. Thus the Marlovian tragedy is well advanced in form and conception both.

3. Shakespearean Tragedy. In the tragedies of Shakespeare we come across two types of strugale—the outer and the inner. These struggles go to make Shakespearean tragedy. The outer tragedy which deals with outer struggle is full of torture and bloodshed while the inner tragedy which deals with the inner struggle is built up by an intense conflict between the character and emotions. In some of his tragedies the supernatual element is predominating. Generally these supernatural forces remain invisible but they at the same time cast a great influence on the development of the plot. The most outstanding feature of Shakespearean tragedy is that her heroes fail to battle with fate successfully. The forces working against them prove strong for them, and it is mainly due to such forces that they meet their tragic downfall. We will discuss Shakespearean tragedy more exhaustively in the following pages.

4. The Heroic Tragedy. This type of tragedy arose during the Restoration Period. It contains many features of the Shakespearean tragedy in an exaggerated form. The outer and inner struggles, the supernatural element and the haughty nature of the heroes are the chief characteris-

tics of Shakespearean tragedy and they are present in the heroic tragedy too. The greatest point of demerit of this type of tragedy is its exaggeration which gives a sense of absurdity and baselessness.

5. **The Tragedy of Horror.** In connection with the tragedy of 'Horror', the names of Webster and Ford are notable. The element of horror is found in Shakespeare's plays as well—*King Lear*, *Macbeth* and *Hamlet* contain this element in abundance. In these plays the 'Horror' is created not through the *dramatis personae* but through sensational situations. The 'Horror' tragedies make an appeal to the audience because they produce thrills of awe and majesty. These thrills are caused not through powerful dialogue so much as through the horrible forces and situations against which the characters struggle hard and meet their tragic ends.

6. **The Domestic Tragedy.** The domestic tragedy deals with the life of the common people and lacks the atmosphere of majesty and grandeur. This type of tragedy draws its matter from the domestic life of the people. Shakespeare's *Othello* may be put in the category of domestic tragedy. Its hero, though not a king, is yet an extraordinary person with a lofty personality. The plot of *Othello* is, however, concerned mainly with the domestic problems of the hero's life and, therefore, it may be cited as a model of this type of tragedy.

HISTORY OF ENGLISH DRAMA

1. **Miracle or Mystery Plays.** In England drama was originally employed to serve religious purposes. If we go back to the period of the tenth century we shall find that events like the birth and resurrection of Christ were brought home to the common people through rudimentary dramatic performances. When the Normans came to England they brought these religious dramatic performances with them to that country. It were these performances which developed into Miracle plays with the advancement of time. These Mystery plays, as they are often called, drew

the material from the Bible. The aim of these plays was to expound the mysteries of religion and they were acted in the honour of various religious saints. All the legendary miracles were shown on the stage. The earliest plays of such types were written in vernacular in the thirteenth century. Formerly these plays were acted under the auspices of the church but in the course of time great changes took place. Latin was replaced by the vernacular and the Mystery plays became the street plays to be performed by the common people in public places ; the practical methods and technique of performance of these plays were developed, and the art of acting was no longer the monopoly of the churches. Public stages were opened by the common people, the churches being suspicious about the public stages, looked at them with indifference. The common people, however, began to take a greater interest in them. The Miracles which were represented through churches were now acted on the public stages with greater zeal and enthusiasm and with greater art. In the festivals held in connection with the celebration of the various events of Jesus Christ, various interesting and moralising episodes were performed by the people. After some time such performances became the usual feature of English society.

2. **Morality Plays.** The Miracle plays were highly popular up to the course of the sixteenth century. After that they developed into Morality plays. The aim of such plays was to teach the people morality and religion through allegorical representation of religious episodes. Although as compared to the Miracle plays, the moralities had less dramatic interest power, yet as they had definite plots they left the dogmatic scriptural narrative far behind. The lack of interest from which the new plays suffered was a weakness which was removed to a very great extent through various types of aids. Among such aids the scene painting won greater attraction of the poeple. The allegorical characters were individualised to arouse the people's interest to a greater degree. The actual historical and contemptuous people were after sometime substituted for particular virtues and vices and thus the drama passed

through the two periods of its infancy—the period of the Miracle playr, and that of Morality plays.

3. **Comic Interludes.** As the time passed on, comic relief was introduced in the Morality plays. The Devil was brought attended with Vice and they played tricks of funny nature and the audience were much delighted at the humour created through jesting.

4. **Emergence of Literary Form.** These comic interludes got detached from the Moralities in the course of time. A stage came when these interludes took a literary form in the hands of John Heywood. From then onward they were performed as household entertainment by domestic servants and other people. It is in the interludes that we find the clear traces of the origin of the literary form of drama.

5. **Early comedies and tragedies.** To trace the first comedy and tragedy in English literature we have to go back as far or even before the first half of the sixteenth century. Nicholas Udall's *Ralph Roister Doister* dates back to 1550. If looked at from the technical point of view of the construction of the plot and the division of the play into five Acts, we may take it as a classical production. When we look at it from the point of view of the story itself as well as the characters and the diction it is something different. The verses contained in it are thoroughly English and therefore we may safely declare *Ralph Roister Doister* as being the first dramatic attempt in English literature, *Gorboduc*, by Norton and Sackville, has been acknowledged by the critics as being the first English tragedy. We mark in this drama that although the subject has been borrowed from amongst the popular legends selected from British history the model is purely classical. This was the period when people took great interest in writing drama. There were some writers who followed the models of the ancient writers like Seneca, Plautus and others. Those who based their production on classical models, rigidly observed the unities laid down by classical writers. The public, however, did not take

much interest in the classical plays abiding by the law of unities and therefore the writers began to produce such plays which defied these laws. The example of such unconventional plays may be sought in *Gorboduc*.

6. **The Prrdecessors of Shakespeare.** To get ourselves introduced with those predecessors of Shakespeare who paved the way for him, we have to study the dramatic literature produced by the dramatists known as 'University Wits' during the period beginning from the year 1580 and ending with the year 1590. The first name worth mentioning in this connection is that of John Lyly. He wrote prose dialogue in a smart style and led the way in opening new vistas in the field of drama. George Peele, who was more practical than dramatic, began to write in sweet and melodious verses. Thomas Kyd was the first to create what may be termed as the tragedy of blood. It was he who first embodied the story of Hamlet which was later on adopted by Shakespeare with some alterations. Then there was a dramatist named Robert Greene. He took the first step in depicting through drama the country life and fresh young womanhood of the English society. The most important of all the University Wits named above, Marlowe stands head and shoulders high because it was he who cleared the way for Sakespeare by creating the modern dramatic tragedy. His contribution was great because he took out the drama from the shackles of the hard and fast rules in which his predecessors had bound it down. Again it was he who made the blank verse a proper vehicle for drama.

EARLY ELIZABETHAN DRAMA

1. **The Origins.** John Buchan says that when Henry VIII mounted the throne the *'Morality play' still held the field of drama.* Indeed, it lingered on until the days of Shakespeare, receiving for a time a new lease of life at the hands of rival theologians. who found it a convenient weapon for thrashing out the problems which the Reformation had raised. Even Foxe, the martyrologist, left a Latin religious drama. The Protestant bishop John Bale

(1495-1563) wrote twenty-two plays, of which only five have survived, the most important being *King John*, an anti-papal Chronicle play.

2. **The Interlude.** But the Renaissance spirit at the Tudor court demanded plays which would amuse rather than instruct. The result was the rise of Interlude—a new type of *comedy*, lasting from *one to two hours*, *farcical* in character and generally dealing with a *single* incident or anecdote. It flourished during the first half of the 16th century, and bridged the gap between mediaeval and Elizabethan drama, being itself derived partly from the *comic elements of the morality* and partly from the French '*sottie*' or farce. The most famous writer of interludes was John Heywood (1497—1578), who, beginning life as one of Heny VIII.'s "singing-men," rose high in favour at court and married into the family or Sir Thomas More. Six of his plays are extant, the best known being the *Four PP*, and entertaining dialogue between a Pothecary, a Pardoner, a Palmer, and a Pedlar, in which the last named is appointed to decide which of the other three can tell the biggest lie.

3. **Scholastic Drama.** Terence had been read throughout the Middle Ages; Petrarch had drawn attention to Seneca and Plautus. But only in the middle of the 15th century did men find out that these writers had intended their plays to be actually performed. The discovery led to an outburst of dramatic activity in the schools and universities of Europe during the 16th century. Teachers not only made their pupils perform the classical dramas, but set themselves to write Latin plays in imitation of them. Thus there was a large body of Latin drama produced at English seats of learning during the Tudor period which scholars are only now beginning to appraise at its proper value. Quite apart from this, the boy-players, more especially of the choir-schools—St. Paul's, the Chapel Royal, etc.,—exerted a powerful influence upon the development of the vernacular drama. Heywood wrote his interludes for such "children," and they were the favourite performers at court, where they generally acted

plays in the native tongue, right up to the time of Shakespeare. The vast bulk of these English plays of scholastic origin have been lost, but a few remain to give us a taste of their quality.

4. The University Wits. The greatest writers are not come across until some ten years later but the intervening decade belongs to a group of seven young writers, generally called the "University Wits," who, bred in the traditions of the classical drama, went down to the popular stage and delivered it.

> From jigging veins of riming mother wits,
> And such conceits as clownage keeps in play,

filling the Elizabethan theatre with "high astounding terms," with charming romances, and with exquisite lyrics. Of those remarkable men, who by no means confined their attention to the drama, the earliest to enter the field was John Lyly. He stands somewhat apart from his fellows, inasmuch as he wrote almost wholly for the court and for the boys' companies rather than for the popular stage. He was, in fact, the last and perhaps the best of a long line of court dramatists whose task of entertaining the queen was presently to be committed to the "public players." Lyly's eight plays, to which Shakespeare owed a considerable debt, were court allegories. Their themes were derived generally from classical mythology, and nearly all were in prose, steeped in the euphuistic style that Lyly himself had popularized in his novel *Euphues*. Lyly was the wittiest of the "University Wits," and his best plays, such as *Endymion* and *Campaspe*, still glow with a certain faint fairy moonlight. George Peele, another of this group, is remembered chiefly for his *Arraignment of Paris* and *David and Bethsabe*, two unequal plays containing much sweet flowing verse. Thomas Kyd in *The Spanish Tragedy*, one of the most popular dramas of the age, established a type aptly described as "the tragedy of blood," to which *Titus Andronicus* belongs, while *Hamlet* itself was based upon an earlier horror-play of the same genre, said to have been written by Kyd.

Thomas Lodge has bequeathed us turgid classical dramas like *The Wounds of Civil War*, and was moreover a collaborator with Robert Greene, a man of much greater parts, who squandered his genius in drink and much second-rate writing. Greene was a prolific playwright, and his best dramas belong to the same species which Shakespeare brought to perfection in *As You Like It* and *The Winter's Tale*, namely, the dramatized pastoral romance. Another of Greene's collaborators was Thomas Nash, though his extant dramatic work is slight.

5. **Christopher Marlowe.** Greatest of all was Christopher Marlowe (1564-93). Youngest but one of the seven, being born in the same year as Shakespeare, this "marvellous boy," before his untimely death at the age of 29, had founded English romantic tragedy, had written one of the greatest poetical dramas in our language, and had converted the stiff mechanical blank verse of *Gorboduc* into a vital form which Shakespeare in his turn could make fit for the lips of his greatest creations. But he was far from being a pioneer. The fame of his contemporaries is the light which they derive from their proximity to Shakespeare ; Marlowe shines for us across the centuries in the blaze of his own genius. No one but Milton could bend the bow of "grand style" as he bent it, or catch the spirit of Prometheus as he caught it; while his poem *Hero and Leander* proves him a son also of the gentler muse of sweet sensuousness to whom Spenser devoted the service of a lifetime. His dramas show only moderate constructive ability or power of characterization, but they carry the reader away by the sheer force and beauty of their language, and by the titanic visions which they call up in the mind. Tamburlaine, his earliest and crudest creation, comes upon the stage driving a team of kings before his chariot ; Barabas, in *The Jew of Malta*, rules the world by the power of gold ; Faustus sells his soul for a magician's wand. Each is inspired by a lust of power, and the tragedy always pursues the same course—triumph followed by a mighty fall. From the technical point of view, Marlowe's best work is *Edward II*, but it cannot compare in psychological interest or poetic grandeur

with *Doctor Faustus*, which became the admired model of the finest philosophical play of modern times, Goethe's *Faust*. For this great symbolic tragedy deals with a theme which was part not only of the author's inner experience but of the very stuff which nourished the Renaissance spirit.

THE ELIZABETHAN AGE

GENERAL VIEW

1. Social Conditions. The first half of the 16th century had been, in the words of John Buchan, *an epoch of confusion and distraction*, the result of the arbitrary policy of Henry VIII, and partly of the bitter religious discords. No monarch has ever entered upon his reign under more unfavourable conditions than Elizabeth had to face in 1558. The *political credit* of the country was at its *lowest*; in the *economic* sphere the *uncertainty* that followed the *upheaval* of the monasteries was at its deepest and the embers of *religious persecution* smouldered sullenly among the people. The loss of Calais was the final blow in the dismal strife; *failure* was written over all our undertakings. But the new queen, fortunately, proved equal to her position. With wonderful tact and patience, with a remarkable political insight and clear view of the nation's needs, with the cunning of a born statesman, and a patriotism which her vanity and irresponsibility in petty personal matters did not conceal, *Elizabeth changed the face of the country*. The England of 1580 was a new England—*proud, exultant, successful, able to hold up its head in Europe*, a source of very great misgiving to Philip II, and the Popes. Her *citizens*, and her *sailors* especially, were everywhere *famous*. With the defeat of the Armada the climax was reached. *She was again a nation ready and tuned for a great literature*; Spenser, Shakespeare, Bacon, and many lesser men arose, and gave immortal expression to the new national self-consciousness.

2. Influence of the Renaissance on Culture: *Material prosperity*, however, would have been worse than useless if there had not been at work in the best minds the *spirit of culture* which was the fruit of the *Renaissance*, and which first showed its full glory in the reign of Elizabeth. The effect of the *impulse* given by such pioneers of scholarship as Colet, Erasmus, and More was seen in the *spread of education*, and in the interest in *proper methods of teaching* revealed by such a book as *The Schoolmaster* of Roget Ascham. A *thorough knowledge* of Latin and Greek could be obtained at the universities, and opportunities were made by which promising pupils of all classes could avail themselves of the new studies. The Latin of the Renaissance was a very different matter from the Latin of the Middle Ages. The best authors—notably Virgil, Ovid, and Cicero—were studied in their best works. Ovid in particular was a favourite poet among Elizabethans—even among non-university men like Shakespeare; while Ben Jonson, who spent at the best a very short time at Cambridge, knew his Horace and Tacitus, as well as authors of lesser standing. *Greek was not so familiar, except to a comparative few; but its influence was immense.* It is well that the *spirit of Greek was all powerful*, for in the humanity of Elizabethan culture it managed very completely to overwhelm the pedantries of the Harveys and their like, who would have enslaved English verse in the unsuitable metres of the Latin poets. It was not Seneca or Plautus who gave the tone and form to English drama, but Shakespeare and Marlowe, who breathed a broader and more humane air. Meanwhile scholars were busy on *translations of the classics*; books like Golding's Ovid (*Metamorphoses*), North's Plutarch, and Chapman's Homer places the ancient masterpieces in the hands of those who had "little Latin and less Greek." The English *owed much* during this period to the examples of *Italy and France*. In scholarship, in potery, in romance, in pastoral, Italy led Europe during the Renaissance period: England looked to Italy for pioneers in literary criticism, to Petrarch for the sonnet, to Ariosto for romantic epic, to Sannazaro for an *Arcadia*, to Bandello and Cinthio for many novels and

dramatic plots. In France we find the Pleiad showing an example of cultured poetry, and Montaigne leading the way for Bacon. And mention of Bacon reminds us that in the more august realm of philosophy, Elizabethan England felt the impulse towards *free and liberal learning*; the *advancement of science* is reflected in Gilbert's work on magnetism and in Harvey's discovery of the true course of the circulation of the blood.

3 **The Renaissance and English Literature.** The many-sided *intellectual adventurousness* of the Renaissance was, in fact, *fully reflected in English literature.* Nor were the English immune from all its *excesses* and *freakishness.* There were books, like Lyly's *Euphues,* which became a fashionable vogue and made a tedious *display* of their learning, in *recondite allusions* and *fantastic affectations*; and most of the poems of the time are honey-combed with *classical references.* By the side of this we have the *bold speculations* of Marlowe, *defiant excursion* across the usual bounds of the imagination; and later, the *frank animalism* of those later dramatists to whom liberty meant unshackled licence. This was held in check by the steady growth, even during Elizabeth's reign, of that *Puritanism* which ultimately *killed the drama for a time.* The most typically Elizabethan writers, like Spenser, Sidney and Lyly, had in them indeed the *essential seriousness of the Puritan,* and insisted upon the *moral purpose* of their writings. In some degrees Ben Jonson carried their seriousness of motive over into the next reign; but it was in vain. The splendour had faded. Neither the court nor the public could be moved again by the ideals which inspired the exultant hour of Elizabethan literature. *The drama declined into melodramatic horrors, frank indecency, grossly unnatural plots*—expiring in the respectable Shirley after the hectic shows of Fletcher, Middleton, Webster, and Ford. It is not given to any literature of any people to maintain for long the level of a Spenser or a Shakespeare, or even of a Ben Jonson.

4. **Influence of a Reinvigorated National Life.** The excrescences which flourished on Elizabethan litera-

ture—artificial fashions like the Euphues craze, the Arcadian mirage, the sonnet sequences and so forth, are but the signs of *exuberant life.* We are in the age of Drake, Frobisher, and Hawkins: men who, by methods which were, to say the least, rough and ready, opened many of the unimagined wonders of the world to the eyes of their countrymen. That Englishmen were *deeply stirred by their goings and discoveries* is evident from such travel books as Hakluyt's *Voyages,* but far more from the references in Shakespeare and many others, which show how strong was the impression made. We may read of these in *Othello* and *The Tempest* for example; still more in the general spirit of such works as *Tamburlaine* or *A Winter's Tale.* The world had become a bigger place, unimaginably richer. The riotous and varied fancy of such Elizabethan writing was the direct result of the revelations of Drake and his comrades.

At the centre of this *outburst of national activity,* the focus of its *patriotism,* the Gloriana of its *loftiest vision,* the demi-goddess of its *self-confident faith,* was the queen herself. She shared in the poetic as well as in the political triumphs of her reign. At her court such men were welcome as Sidney and Spenser, as well as Leicester. She was fond of display, fond of compliments; and she obtained both in abundance from her men of letters. She was vain and capricious, but she could appreciate literary distinction, and was herself no mean scholar.

It was impossible, with the same sincerity, to treat James I in that spirit. Although he had some *pretensions to learning,* he was *mean and weak* in his statecraft as he was pedantic and narrow-minded in his literary interests. After the death of Cecil, in 1612, the last link with Elizabethan policy was broken. Sir Walter Raleigh was in prison, and James was moving towards that pusillanimous friendship for Spain which cost Raleigh his life. The tone of the court *deteriorated. Great poetry ceased to come forth, the drama reflected the corrupt morals of an uncritical court* which could not dine on any fare that was not highly seasoned. Instead of unity there was

now *division* in the nation. The growth of Puritan influence was set off by an equally serious drift into a more Catholic point of view, which became emphatic under Charles I. Between the two the average man fell into a *slough*, which is reflected in the tone of our later drama. *And thus the Elizabethan literature slowly fades into the shadow of a great national conflict.*

5. **The Stage and the Playwright.** The development of the drama as a literary product which has been traced as far as Marlowe and was to culminate during the last years of Elizabeth in the art of Shakespeare, carried with it a corresponding evolution in the methods of presenting plays to the public. *The mystery plays were performed by men of any and every class*—amateurs in our modern phrase; and their stage was merely a *movable* "pageant"; there were *no professional actors* and *no fixed place* for the entertainment. But with the development of the more *elaborate moralities and interludes*, the position of playwright and actor alike became *more definite.* The playing of interludes became a kind of profession; but for a very long time the player himself was held in disrepute. The office of Master of the Revels, of which we first hear in 1546, kept the performances, no doubt; but right on into the middle of Elizabeth's reign the rank and file of professional players were *socially branded* and declared by statute to be *rogues and vagabonds, liable to arrest* unless they could produce a licence signed by two justices. We can picture these strolling players, tramping from place to place and combining the performance of interludes and "vain-plays" with jugglings, pipings, and other mountebank tricks for the amusement of illiterate audiences up and down the land: that riots and disturbances, and all manner of iniquities often followed their shows is likely enough; and *the Elizabethan dramatist had the prejudice thus created to contend against, and to overcome if he could.* The growth of *Puritanism*, with its *severe moral sense*, made another *obstacle* for him which he had hardly yet surmounted.

The chief actors of the day were to be, like Shakespeare, men of the middle class; it was not *Gorboduc*,

but *Tamburlaine*, that marked the future direction of English drama. Many players remained rogues and vagabonds; yet it was from the ranks of such men that the Elizabethan theatre drew its exponents. Even Gosson confessed, in 1579, that there were good men and worthy citizens among the players: by 1600 such a statement would have been a truism, although the attacks on the stage continued, until their climax in Prynne's *Histriomastix* (1633).

6. **The Theatres.** In the early days of their existence the Earl of Leicester's men performed their comedies, tragedies, and interludes in the open yards of some of the inns in the City: but the City Council, then and later, were hostile to these performances from their rowdy accompaniments. The city had its own rights, and guarded them jealously even against the Lord Chamberlain himself; it expelled the players from its precincts; and thus it came out that the first theatre, built for the particular purpose of exhibiting stage plays, was erected outside its borders in Shoreditch. This was done in 1577 by James Burbage, the father of the great actor. Burbage's Theatre was little more than a glorified inn-yard, but was circular in form, because he wanted it to be adapted to the purpose of a bear-garden and cockpit, as well as to that of theatrical performance. It was open to the sky, and the spectators stood in the pit to witness the play, just as they had done in the inn-yard. There was no gallery, though there may have been private boxes for wealthy patrons. The movable stage was rectangular and projected towards the centre of the building; the audience could stand on three sides of it, and the conveniences for the actors were of the crudest description. A separate tiring-house was possibly curtained off behind the stage, but no more. In such humble circumstances were the plays of Marlowe and Greene first presented to an Elizabethan audience. Still the wooden building represented a great advance, and its ornamental pretensions attracted the censure of Puritan preachers and of Stephen Gosson. It does not seem to have been an entirely successful speculation;

after the death of Burbage it was pulled down, and its timber used in the construction of the more famous Globe. The Curtain Playhouse, which was built shortly after Burbage's Theatre and also in Shoreditch, was more fortunate, and lasted almost to the bad days when the theatres were closed altogether.

7. **Scenery.** Scenery, in our modern sense of the term, did not exist. Obviously the open arrangement of the stage made it impossible to have any such elaborate and movable machinery. No attempt seems to have been made to represent places or scenes pictorially. The gap was filled, no doubt, partly by the use of suitable properties, and possibly by a bill indicating the country or city represented; but most commonly by the words of the actors themselves. The appeal was frankly made, as it is in the prologue to *Henry V*, to the imagination of the audience; many well-known passages of descriptive poetry in the plays of Shakespeare and his fellow-playwrights were written to supply this deficiency of suggestive scenery. In court productions, doubtless, something more was done, and in the development of the masque under James I, possibilities of symbolical decoration were expolited by the art of Inigo Jones and the fancy of Ben Jonson; but the dramatist proper did not profit by this, and during the whole of our fruitful dramatic epoch the greatest plays were produced on a stage bare of all imitative scenery. In the matter of properties and costumes, however, a great deal was done to aid the actor and his audience.

8. **The Audience.** The performance of a play in one of the public theatres was advertised by bills, posted in public places and outside the door of the theatre. It usually took place in the afternoon, beginning about three o'clock. The audience assembled early, and would spend the time of waiting in card-playing, at dice, or in rowdy horseplay; smoking and drinking were allowed; and doubtless people brought other helps to conviviality. Free criticism followed every point in the performance; if the play did not please the groundlings it was promptly hissed off the stage. The "dotages" of Ben Jonson suffered this fate, and even in his successful time Ben wrote contemp-

tuously of playgoers who did not endure a thoughtful drama and demanded melodramatic impossibilities. The public paid to be amused, and its sense of humour was not any more than it is now, of the intellectual sort. Hence the universal presence of "comic stuff" even in tragedy. But whereas this is a ruinous intrusion in most plays, in Shakespeare it is responsible for Shallows and Fluellens and for a mighty group of wonderful fools, with Lear's fool as their king. A rougher element enters into such men as Dekker and Middleton ; it is often enough indecent, but usually it is genuine and humanly interesting. The playwrights responded to their audiences, and the result was not always clean. Yet the melodrama of Marlowe enshrines the poetry of *Faustus* ; the *vox populi* working in the genius of Shakespeare produced Falstaff. Many crudities of structures and finish in the Elizabethan drama must be ascribed to the conditions of its performance. But on the whole it was a full-blooded imaginative thing ; and the men who made it, men who must needs often struggle for a livelihood amid the scum of society, were a remarkable body.

IMPORTANT QUESTIONNAIRE

[*The answers to the important University questions posed here in this 'Questionnaire' may be found in the 'General Introduction.' The students are advised to prepare themselves thoroughly in the light of these questions.*]

- Explain the full significance of the term 'drama'.
- "The drama may be said to have originated in the imitation of action of another aided by gesture, speech and dress." Discuss.
- " Victor Hugo insists that drama is a 'focussing mirror'." How far do you agree with this view in the light of the 'theory of imitation' ?
- " The stage is supposed to delude the spectators and to produce a strong illusion of reality in their minds." Comment.

- What is the role played by the element of reality in the drama ?
- " The essence of drama is conflict." Discuss.
- What is the essential significance of the word 'dramatic' ?
- " A play wlthout the conception of the presence of an audience is no play at all." Discuss.
- "The theatrical element occupies an important position in the drama." Comment.
- " The aim of drama is to delight and teach." How far do you agree with this claim ?
- What are the various rules of drama ? How far must a dramatist abide by them ?
- Write a detailed note on the three Unities of drama.
- " No drama can exist without some kind of a plot." Discuss.
- Write a note on the technical importance and aspect of characterisation.
- " Dialogue is a most important vehicle of expression in the drama." Comment, enumerating the requirements of a good dialogue.
- Write a note on 'soliloquy' and 'asides'.
- What is the role played by 'parallelism,' 'contrast.' and 'dramatic irony' in the structual design of a dramatic work ?
- Write a note on the element of surprise in a play.
- What are the natural divisions of a 'dramatic plot ?'

- Describe the various kinds of drama explaining their respective characteristics.
- What are the various types of 'English Tragedy'? Explain each in detail.
- Write an explanatory note on the types of English comedy.
- Give the history of drama.
- What are the chief characteristics of the Elizabethan drama? Discuss them in detail.
- Write a note on each of the following :—

  (1) Interludes, (2) Scholastic Drama, (3) Early Comedy and Tragedy, (4) The University Wits, and (5) Christopher Marlowe.
- Trace the influence of the Renaissance on English culture and literature.
- Write a note on (1) Elizabethan theatre, and (2) Audience.

SECTION II
AN INTRODUCTION TO SHAKESPEARE
(1564-1616)

Life. Born in 1564 at Stratford, Shakespeare died in 1616 leaving the world in doubt about many facts of his life. Nothing authentic is known about him in satisfactor detail to satisfy the unlimited curiosity of his admirers. While tracing the life of Shakespeare, John Buchan, the author of *History of English Literature*, helplessly remarks that we should thank "the world's insatiable curiosity and the patient research of students," which made the collection of more biographical facts possible "about the greatest of English poets than about any of his literary contemporaries accept Ben Jonson." "Yet when all is said," says the biographer. "these facts which are for the most part details of purchases and law-suits can be printed upon two sheets of note paper and learned volumes labelled 'The Life of William Shakespeare' are of necessity replete with unverified tradition and 'nice conjecture'." These remarks are very significant. The fact is that the information about Shakespeare's actual life is only in the form of a skeleton and the structure raised through the various researches has now grown into something like an 'orthodox legend.'

Out of all legends and conjectures, a plausible life of William Shakespeare has been constructed. It is a strange fact, however, that in spite of all that, very little definite material is available to build up the portrait of Shakespeare as a man. We know little of this great literary genius as a private citizen. Briefly speaking, there are three stages of Shakespeare's life—(1) Life at Stratford-on-Avon (1564—1586), (2) Life in London (1586—1604), (3) Life at Stratford-on-Avon again (1604—1616). Now we will give important biographical events of each of the three stages of this great dramatist's life.

Life at Stratford-on-Avon (1564—1586). It was in 1564 that William Shakespeare was born on Stratford-on-Avon. His baptism was celeberated on the 27th of April, 1564. There is evidence to believe that the ancestors of William Shakespeare were farmers. His father John Shakespeare was a prosperous business man and had achieved an important position in the municipal affairs of Stratford, John Shakespeare had married Mary Arden in 1557, seven years before the birth of William Shakespeare. This lady did also belong to a family of farmers. Her parents enjoyed a better position than her husband's kinsfolk. There is proof on record that some small landed property was inherited through Mary Arden. This lady does not seem to be educated. There is no clear proof that she could even sign her name. Four sons and two daughters were born to John Shakespeare and Mary Arden. Joan was born in 1558, and Margret in 1562. Both died in infancy. The third child was William Shakespeare who was destined to become the greatest dramatist and poet for all ages. Shakespeare passed his infancy in prosperous environments till he became thirteen years of age. His father was elected as an Alderman in 1565. Three years later he became Mayor or Baliff. Thereafter in 1577 his business began to fail and he fell on evil days. In 1578 John Shakespeare was obliged to mortgage some of his wife's property to make up the business losses. Gradually, he lost all interest in municipal affairs and retired from public life.

Education. Shakespeare had his early education at the Free Grammar School of his native town. There he learnt what his friend and fellow-playwright, Ben Jonson, calls 'small Latin and less Greek.' Anyhow, Shakespeare was obliged to give up his studies at the school on account of the decline in his father's fortunes. At that time he was only thirteen years of age. The financial depression, through which his family was passing, compelled him to apply himself to the trade of a butcher, the only means upon which his father also depended.

Marriage. So Shakespeare grew into a youth of eighteen. In 1582 he married Anne Hathaway of Shottery, a hamlet by Stratford. Now this lady was eight years older than her husband. He, however, continued to live with her for some years in his native town where three children were born to the pair. Then some complications are said to have developed between the two. Some biographers claim that his married life was unhappy. In proof of their contention they quote a passage in *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* where the fact that 'the course of true love did not run smooth' has been described to be resulting from several causes among which 'misgrafted in respect of years' is one.

Departure. Shakespeare left Stratford for London in about 1587. The exact date of his departure is not known. His earliest biographer, Rowe, says that Shakespeare had stolen a deer from Sir Thomas Lucy's park and the latter being a Squire and Magistrate, ordered Shakespeare to be whipped and imprisoned.

Satires. The treatment of Sir Lucy provoked Shakespeare to an extreme degree. He composed a ballad on the subject and posted it upon the gates of the Squire's park. Again, in his play *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, and in the second part of *Henry IV*, he painted a caricature of Sir Thomas in the ridiculous shape of Justice Shallow. All this infuriated Sir Thomas Lucy who took steps for the further prosecution of Shakespeare. But Shakespeare took flight to London and escaped such a possibility, Now, through this or the domestic cause which might or might not have influenced Shakespeare in his resolution to migrate to London, one thing is quite probable that he had become by now quite conscious of his talents which required a wider field and sphere of activity than his native town could afford him. It became necessary for him to satisfy this urge. In fact his expanding talents induced him to test his powers in London where there was greater scope for him.

Life in London (1586—1604). Shakespeare was only twenty-two when he went to London. It must have

been very difficult for him to make both ends meet in that great city. Some biographers of Shakespeare have given much importance to the legend which goes to say that he began by attending to visitors' horses outside the theatrical premises. We need not stop here to discuss the various other stories of such type because they all of them are based on pure speculation. It is, however, an established fact that a new phase had begun in the life of Shakespeare by his movement to London, where "the flower of his genius blossomed forth." He had now ample opportunities of studying men and manners. The great drama of human life passed before his eyes. It enriched his mind with "varied experience, a wide outlook, human sympathies, and a knowledge of living men and women." He did not spend years on patient study and meditation like Milton. On the other hand he devoted his keen faculties of observation to study the various shades and aspects of actual life surging and seething round him in the great city of London.

England. England of Shakespeare's age was passing through a remarkable era. It was an era of 'storm and stress', of 'remarkable men and women', and of 'numerous world-shaking' and 'epoch-making' events. There was prosperity at home and prestige abroad of a degree unknown to England at any time earlier in its history. We have already studied the various phases of this glorious era in the general introduction given in the preceding pages. What we have to consider is that the nature and temper of his age must have left an indelible impression on Shakespeare's mind, and that the various great movements in various spheres of life started under the influence of the Renaissance must have moulded his tastes and interests to a considerable extent.

Start. It is said that Shakespeare began his career as a writer by adopting and re-writing earlier plays produced by other dramatists. The first date on record when his name is mentioned as a successful actor and author is the year 1952. It is an established fact now, that he actually played on the stage the part of Adam in *As You Like It* and of the Ghost in *Hamlet*.

Patronage. It was about this time that he secured the patronage of the young Earl of Southampton, whom he described as the heir of my invention and dedicated, in 1593, his poem of *Venus and Adonis.* In 1594 another poem *Lucrece* appeared. It was also dedicated to the same Earl. It is on record that the same year he appeared before Queen Elizabeth as an actor. He was now rapidly producing his earlier drama—the impressive historical plays and bright comedies. He was laying deep foundations of considerable popularity and prosperity. In 1599 a play-house known as Globe Theatre was built. Shakespeare became one of the principal proprietors of this theatre. It is marked that he was now steadily investing money in property at Stratford-on-Avon and was improving his financial condition on a sound basis.

Life at Stratford-on-Avon again (1604-1616). As these facts show, Shakespeare's life in London was one of great literary industry. He was now passing through the middle stage of his life, and it appears that "he had developed quite a good deal of understanding in practical and business affairs." The fact is that "he spent the last twenty years of his life in endless struggle to attain prosperity and worldly respectability." His life shows that "money was never the supreme concern with him." He cared for it "only so far as it could purchase decency and comfort for him." Anyhow, Shakespeare returned to his native place, Stratford, after an absence of eleven years. He went there "with the object of re-establishing the fortunes of his family." By this time he had acquired quite a good deal of reputation among his fellow townsmen on account of his prosperity and influence. The distinction of a coat-of-arms added to his influence and prestige. Having sufficient wealth at his disposal to pass the rest of his life in peace and prosperity, he produced several plays. In the year 1616 his health began to deteriorate and at last he died at the age of fifty-two. The actual cause of his death is not known. His body was laid in the Parish Church of his native town Stratford-on-Avon. The following epitaph is inscribed over his grave :

"'Good frend for Jesus' sake forbeare,
To dig the dust enclosed heare,
Blest be ye man yt spares thes stones,
And curst be he yt moves my bones."

LITERARY CAREER

Shakespeare's literary career begins from 1588 and ends with the year 1612 and is divisible into four periods, each of which gradually merges into the next in such a manner that no clear dividing line may be drawn to distinguish sharply one stage from another at a specific point. These periods correspond with the growth of this great dramatist's intellectual faculties. The four periods referred to above may be explained thus :—

1. **Apprenticeship and Experimentation.** This period begins from 1588 and ends approximately by 1594. It was a period of youthfulness and Shakespeare was learning his trade. He was receiving his training as a dramatic craftsman in the workshop of drama. His progress was rapid. His works of the youthful period are marked by exuberance of imagination, vivacity, clearness and extravagance of language. He takes delight in beauty and has a quick observing eye. He seems to be enjoying at every corner. He was not only an industrious but also a gay and courageous apprentice producing delightful plays like *The Comedy of Errors, A Midsummer Night's Dream, Love's Labour's Lost, Romeo and Juliet*, and *Two Gentlemen of Verona.*

2. **Growth and Development.** The second period of Shakespeare's career begins approximately from the year 1595 and comes to a close by 1600. During this period the bent of Shakespeare's imagination was towards the realities of life. He was splendidly marching forward to understand the world and men.

He seems to be a very confident and all-perceiving man dealing with historical themes in an original and powerful style. It was during this period that he compressed the large and rough historical material into dramatic form.

It required plastic energy of imagination, high common sense and deep interest in the positive facts of reality. It seems that Shakespeare began to realize the real purpose of art. This purpose lay in the actual life and not in conceits and affections. Such were the elements which had led him astray in the earlier period of his career. During the second period his pen seems to gain strength. His work grows robust. He is busy with work of real artistic value, he produces better poetry and appears to possess increasing knowledge of human nature. The plays which he produced during this period are careful works like *The Merchant of Venice, Taming of the Shrew, King John, As You Like It, Twelfth Night, Merry Wives, Much Ado About Nothing, Henry IV*, and *Henry V*, etc. These works indicate Shakespeare's superior talents for wider characterization. We find these plays to be colourful. Life seems to be wonderful. All the women characters painted by Shakespeare during this period are inspired with nobler values of life. The virtues of womanhood radiate in his female characters like Portia. His male characters are models selected from all walks of life. We find not only kings and nobles but also soldiers and statesmen. There are traitors and villains as well. In short, in the second period, Shakespeare advances with great vigour in all directions. His characterization, knowledge, wit, wisdom, political insight, pathos, etc., develop with great speed.

3. **Full Maturity**. This period begins from the year 1600 and comes to a conclusion in 1607. This is a period of gloom and depression. Shakespeare's powers are at the zenith of maturity. He ceased to care for fantastic tales of mirth and love. He does not take much interest in the thrills of history and stirring wars. He seems to descend into the depths of the human heart with a view to study the darkest and saddest aspects of human life. He wishes to discover the great mystery lying behind evil. With a firm belief in human virtue he seems to be at work in the very art and centre of things. This is a period of great comedies and tragedies. How this change came about in Shakespeare, why he became so evidently sad, are questions which cannot be possibly answered with accu-

racy and exactness. We may depend upon conjectures. It must be some personal experiences—some experiences of misfortunes—which snatched away the jollity from his pen. He seems to be "maturing into a profound philosopher." It is at this stage that he comes in contact with sorrow and disappointment in actual life. *Macbeth, Hamlet, Othello, King Lear, Antony and Cleopatra, All's Well that End's Well,* and *Measure for Measure,* etc., are some of the masterpieces of this period. They present curious phenomena of life. Evil is victorious over virtue. The baser characters are triumphant over the nobler. In short, Shakespeare "appears to have deserted the writing of light-hearted comedies and turned to tragedy, dealing with the grave and serious aspects of life." Professor Dowden is of opinion that this change came over the dramatist because his thoughts were over-clouded with gloom and sadness.

4. Restoration of Serenity. The fourth and the last period of Shakespeare's literary career begins with 1607 and ends with 1613. Although the gloom which had settled too deep in Shakespeare's heart does not depart from him but the clouds of bitterness are dispelled. The storm seems to have ended and the calm has returned. The sky appears purer and tenderer. Shakespeare seems to have emerged wiser from his trials and sorrows. It appears that he has discovered and understood the inner secret of life. He looks at tha lights and shades of life with great tenderness and a certain amount of pity. He recognizes the need of repentance. In this period, he seems to have entered new days with new lessons. There is reunion and reconciliation rather than bitterness and world-weariness. Simplicity and light-heartedness returns to him. He has grown up to full stature as an artist. He is on the heights standing above the turmoil and trouble, darkness and tragic mystery, terror and crime. He realizes the value of fortitude and serenity as he shoots up to the purer elevations. *Henry VIII, Cymbeline, Winter's Tale, Tempest.* and *Pericles* are his productions of this period.

WORKS OF WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

Many critics have tried to arrange the works of Shakespeare in chronological order. Morton Luce presents a consolidated list of Shakespeare's works. It is as follows :—

(1) Henry VI, Part I (1590) printed in 1623 ; (2) Titus Andronicus (1590) printed in 1600 ; (3) The Comedy of Errors (1591) printed in 1623; (4) Love's Labour's Lost (1591) printed in 1598 ; (5) Henry VI Part II (1592) printed in 1623 ; (6) Henry VII, Part III (1592) printed in 1623 ; (7) Two Gentlemen of Verona (1592) printed in 1623 ; (8) Venus and Adonis (1593) printed in 1593 ; (9) Richard III (1593) printed in 1597 ; (10) The Rape of Lucrece (1594) printed in 1594 ; (11) Sonnets (1594) printed in 1609; (12) Richard II (1594) printed in 1597 ; (13) A Mid-Summer Night's Dream (1594) printed in 1600 ; (14) Romeo and Juliet (1595) printed in 1597 ; (15) All's Well that Ends Well (1595) printed in 1623 ; (16) King John (1596) printed in 1623 ; (17) The Taming of the Shrew (1596) printed in 1623 ; (18) The Merchant of Venice (1596) printed in 1600 ; (19) Henry IV, Part I (1597) printed in 1598 ; (20) Henry IV, Part II (1597) printed in 1600 ; (21) The Merry Wives of Windsor (1598) printed in 1602 ; (22) Much Ado About Nothing (1599) printed in 1600 ; (23) Henry IV (1599) printed in 1600 ; (24) As You Like It (1600) printed in 1623; (25) Twelfth Night (1600) printed in 1623 ; (26) Julius Caesar (1601) printed in 1623 ; (27) Hamlet (1602) printed during 1603 and 1604 ; (28) Troilus and Cressida (1603) printed in 1609 ; (29) Measure for Measure (1604) printed in 1623 , (30) Othello (1604) printed in 1622 ; (31) King Lear (1605) printed in 1608 ; (32) Timon of Athens (1606) printed in 1623 ; (33) *Macbeth* (1606) printed in 1623 ; (34) Pericles (1607) printed in 1609 ; (35) Antony and Cleopatra (1608) printed in 1623 ; (36) Coriolanus (1609) printed in 1623 ; (37) Cymbeline (1609) printed in 1623 ; (38) A Winter's Tale (1610) printed in 1623 ; (39) The Tempest (1611) printed in 1623 ; (40) Hery VIII (1612) printed in 1623.

SHAKESPEARE AS A MAN

The question arises as to what sort of man was

Shakespeare who made such a valuable contribution to literature. Walter Raleigh' in his book entitled *Shakespeare*, says, "From his contemporaries, and those rare and curious enquirers who collected the remnants" of the talk of those Elizabethans who were too near Shakespeare, "we learn that 'his plays took well'; and that he was 'a handsome, well-shaped man; very good company, and of a very ready and pleasant smooth wit.' Those critics who were privileged to know him in his life regarded him chiefly as a successful member of his own class, a prosperous actor-dramatist, whose energy and skill were given to the business of the theatre and the amusements of the play-going public." It is denied that we can find the man Shakespeare in his plays. He is a dramatic poet and poetry is 'feigning.' But everywhere, says Raleigh, "even where we follow with uncertain steps, we feel the pressure of his hand, and are aware that all the knowledge that we gather by the wây is knowledge of him, authorized and communicated by himself." As we grow familiar with his work, we are overwhelmed by the sense that we are in the presence of a living man. "His mind," says Dr. Johnson, was in an uncommon degree vigorous and active. His judgment was accurate, his apprehension quick, and his memory so tenacious, that he was frequently observed to know what he had learned from others in a short time better than those by whom he was informed; and could frequently recollect incidents, with all their combination of circumstances, which few would have regarded at the present time, but which the quickness of his apprehension impressed upon him. He had the art of escaping from his own reflections, and accommodating himself to every new scene. To this quality is to be imputed the extent of his knowledge, compared with the small time, which he spent in visible endeavours to acquire it. He mingled in cursory conversation with the same steadiness of attention as others apply to a lecture; and amidst the appearance of thoughtless gaiety lost no idea that was started, nor any hint that could be improved. He had, therefore, made in coffee-houses the same proficiency as others in their closets; and it is remarkable that the writings of a man of little

education and little reading have an air of learning scarcely to be found in any other performances." This is a very valuable analysis of Shakespeare's dynamic personality. "Try as we may," says Walter Raleigh, "we can never find Shakespeare talking in vague and general terms of that which lay beyond his vision. He testifies of what he knows," The fact is, that dramatic genius "which is sometimes treated as though it could dispense with experience, is in truth a capacity for experience and for widening and applying experience by intelligence and sympathy." The power of Shakespeare's utterance, maintains Raleigh, "springs from this that all his statements carry with them the immediate warrant of experience." Shakespeare was not a character in the narrow sense of the term, or in any sense which may be readily grasped "by minds accustomed to short-hand expressions and ridiculous simplifications of the human problem." The study of Shakespeare, in his habit as he lived, would have baffled the lovers of character. When we read his works we feel that Shakespeare is with us. His contemporaries regarded him as 'ingenious,' 'mellifluous,' 'silver-tongued,' 'honest,' and 'of an open and free nature,' and as 'the gentle Shakespeare.' Raleigh rightly remarks, "If we could make his living acquaintance, we should expect to find in him one of those well-balanced and plastic tempers which enable men to attract something less than their due share of observation and remark as they pass to and fro among their fellows. Children, we feel sure, did not stop their talk when he came near them, but continued in the happy assurance that it was only Master Shakespeare." He was a whole-hearted lover of pleasure, possessing enormous zest in life. He appears to be generous and sensitive having wisdom and tact. "His own nature sought happiness as a plant turns to the light and air." He was a lover of clear and decisive action, and of the deed done. He was endowed with a rich gift of imagination, wide, restless, curious searchings of intelligence and sympathies. These faculties were strong in him by nature and were strengthened every day by the exercise of his profession. "If we find Shakespeare's character difficult to understand," remarks Raleigh, "we

may take this much comfort, that here to Shakespeare is with us. His character was not all of a piece, neat, harmonious and symmetrical." He has revealed his whole mind to us and we feel that his mind is not small enough to be comprehended with ease. The fact is that Shakespeare was rarest of all things, a whole man. He was in a word a seer and a sceptic. "He was the man," says Dryden, "who of all modern, and perhaps ancient poets, had the largest and most comprehensive soul. All the images of nature were still present to him, and he drew them, not laboriously, but luckily; when he describes anything, you more than see it, you feel it too. Those who accuse him to have wanted learning, give him the greatest commendations, he was naturally learned; he needed not the spectacles of books to read Nature; he looked inwards, and found her there." His mind and hand went together and what he thought, he uttered with that easiness, that we have scarce received from him a blot in his papers, say his friends and editors. He had an amazing wealth of vocabulary and idiom. The language that he wielded was subtlest. He was a master of language, and a profound student of the human mind. From the evidence of his plays it has been argued that Shakespeare must have travelled. There is no doubt that he often went out with his company of actors on their summer tours among provincial towns. It is unlikely that he ever crossed the Channel or visited Scotland. Rowe, in his account of the life of William Shakespeare, throws light on another aspect of his character. He refers to his thefts and robberies. He tells us how Shakespeare joined some of his companions in robbing a park belonging to Sir Thomas Lucy. He was prosecuted for this. When he was produced before the court he retorted in lampoons with such effect that the prosecution was redoubled and he was driven from his home. All this, according to Raleigh, is perfectly credible. The evidence is unanimous in its favour. It must, however, he pointed out that such traditions have come down to us through two sources: (1) commonplaces of local gossip at Stratford, (2) stories remembered and repeated by those who had to do with the theatre. What we have to keep in our mind is, that

in his later years Shakespeare was a respectable and well known man at Stratford. There are innumerable tales about Shakespeare which we need not consider. "The broad outlines of his life are not obscure," says Raleigh. "He went to London to seek his fortune, and when he had found it there, returned to Startford, and established himself with his wife and family in peace and prosperity. It is as simple as a fairy-tale. If we must needs look closer, and read the plays into the life, there is nothing to alter in the story. We know that he went through deep waters, no man deeper, and came out on the other side. The simple pities of life were at all times dearest to him.

SHAKESPEARE'S RANGE OF INTEREST

Shakespeare belonged to a glorious age but his range of interest travelled beyond that. His age was an age of Ranaissance and Revival of Learning. It has been regarded as the second great period of poetry in England, and the first of her drama and prose. New learning was flowing into England. The old ideology was in conflict with new values of life. Shakespeare was attracted towards this conflict. This age is described as one of dreams, adventure, and unbounded enthusiasm, influenced by which Bacon confidently claimed, "I have taken all knowledge for my province." His claim reflected the spirit of his time. Shakespeare proved that. The demand of the age was that the mind must go farther than the eye and that imagination must create new forms. Shakespeare did that. Cabot, Drake, Gilbert, Hawkins, Raleigh and a host of other explorers revealed new earths to man's eyes. Literature also began to create new heavens for those earths. Shakespeare created new horizons. The period of Shakespeare was marked with great versatility. Men like Sir Walter Raleigh and Philip Sidney were not only intellectuals but also great soldiers and sailors. Shakespeare was influenced by his Age. The eagerness and curiosity in the Elizabethan Age covered all aspects of life. Shakespeare's plays, too, reveal this fact. It was not

merely an intellectual era. The Elizbethans had a great physical zest for life. They loved music, gardening and, sports too. Shakespeare uses innumerable technical terms covering a wide field of activity. They indicate the taste of the age as much as of the dramatist. We find scenes of bloodshed and torture in Shakespeare's plays. Such scenes reflect the trend and nature of his society. The people being energetic and versatile, took delight in bloodshed, violence, quick and brutal passion which we find in Shakespeare. We know that Ben Jonson actually killed his adversary in a duel and felt no remorse at all. Marlowe was stabbed in a tavern. People loved to witness scenes of bloodshed. They did not look with a revolting eye at the inhumanity of Shylock, tortures of Gloster, etc. Humiliations, persecutions and rebellions were the order of the day. Literature, in course of its development, absorbed the social influences which reflect themselves in the plays of Shakespeare. Queen Elizabeth's love for England inspired the people with a sense of unlimited patriotism which is one of the chief characteristics of Shakespeare too. Shakespeare's was an age of great maritime enterprise. Jaques in *As You Like It* is perhaps a caricature of much travelled Italianate youth of the age. The audience in the days of Shakespeare were always anxious to hear of marvels of the outside world. They loved the travellers. Desdemona in *Othello* loved the Moor mainly because he had widely travelled in foreign lands and had an adventurous spirit to a very high degree. Travelling in those days was full of dangers. The roads were infested with thieves and robbers. Such risks of voyage have been described by Shakespeare in his play, *The Tempest*. In *Henry IV*, Part I, he clearly refers to the case of highway robbery. The description of extravagantly rich dresses and luxuries has been given by Shakespeare in *The Merchant of Venice*. The fact was that the Elizabethans spent all their fortunes on dresses and luxuries. We find Shakespeare representing his age as truly as an artist possibily can. He has depicted the condition of the masses too. Kings and queens appear mere frequently in Shakespeare's plays because in his Age the Sovereign was regarded

with great reverence. The King was acknowledged as a divine power. Elizabeth was much tolerant. She persecuted only those Romanists who refused to regard her as the head of the English Church. The people in Shakespeare's age generally believed in witchcraft and superstition. Heavy penalties were imposed on the practice of witchcraft. The people did, however, continue, to take keen interest in supernaturalism. Shakespeare's plays are full of clear references to these beliefs of the masses. In *Macbeth*, for example, he has skilfully presented witches on the stage. This must have thrilled the audience who loved representations of ghosts and spirits. Shakespeare had great insight into the nature of his audience and he knew full well that the physical appearance of the witches on the stage would cast desirable effect on the people of his Age. Shakespeare lived in an age of great economic prosperity and his plays present the pomp, magnificence and glamour of the contemporary society. The influences of the Revival of Learning are evident in Shakespeare's plays. The Age of Elizabeth was one of great intellectual liberty, of growing intelligence and comfort among all classes. There was prosperity at home and abroad.

It was an age of great thought and action, of high literary development and all round revolution. All these currents moving in society did naturally attract Shakespeare. They moulded his thought to a very great extent, no doubt, but they could in no way put shackles round his comprehensive genius so that we find him standing above his age. His interest lay deep, very deep at the bottom of things, in the fundamental factors of life, in, what we call, the very life-force and nature. The range of Shakespeare's interest spread over those values of the basic culture of man which are permanent and perpetual. The reason why we today appreciate him is not that his plays represent his age but that they represent us and our society, the men and women living not only in one country or climate but the human being, an alive and feeling human being, the human being who has been the same and will remain the same as Shakespeare saw him.

SHAKESPEARE IN HIS PLAYS

Some critics try to search Shakespeare in his works. They maintain that all the tragedies of Shakespeare are the outcome of some profound personal experience. In proof they produce countless illustrations. The cry of Hamlet, for example, is often quoted. It runs thus :—

> "The time is out of joint ! O cursed spite
> That ever I was born to set it right."

Similarly these lines of Lear are often quoted :—

> "Ingratitude, thou marble-hearted fiend.
> More hideous when thou showest thee in a child
> Than the sea-monster !"

These critics claim that such words could come only from the heart of a poet who had actually tasted igratitude at the hands of his friends. Such critics forget that a poet possesses insight and intuitive sympathy. It is not necessary that he should himself, as a man, fall on the thorns of life and bleed in order to produce some such pathetic pieces. Shakespeare was gifted with a faculty of impressing crude facts with poignancy and passion. The underlying inspiration is, however, founded upon the actual experience of life. We may admit, for the sake of discussion, that Shakespeare himself must have experienced spiritual shackles and surprises. He might have been torn with jealousy. His friends might have shown ingratitude towards him. It is obvious that a poet who infuses such a spirit in his utterances must surely have tasted bitterness. He had a rich and varied experience of life and that experience was enough to kindle his imagination into a blaze. Shelley remarks, "Shakespeare as a man, though not immune from the weaknesses of his time and the infirmities of a full and sensuous nature, soon realised that 'man who man would be must rule the empire himself'. Had he not fashioned his life so well, this record he has left behind would have been impossible. Moreover, his compelling greatness lies in that he sounded sorrow and despair yet preserved to the end a brave front, a courageous confidence."

If we try we may trace a distinct development of Shakaspeare's conception of life and personal mood in his plays. We can peep into the mind of Shakespeare and see how it is working. For that purpose we shall have to go to those plays or characters where he indulges in self-delineation or self-criticism. Sometimes we find him ridiculing the false tastes and affectations of his contemporaries, while sometimes he expresses his own dreams, ideals, natural delight, and other personal emotions. He gives his views about ideal landscapes and dreamy realms of his fancy. In his plays like *Hamlet* and *As You Like It*, his personal mood is well marked. Hamlet finds the world out of joint. It reflects Shakespeare's own mood. He looks at the world as a complex and inexplicable wonder, full of countless problems providing food for meditation. Jaques' incessant moralising in the play *As You Like It* reflects Shakespeare's own ideas. Jaques finds sadness in everything. Shakespeare too is overwhelmed with grief because his faith has been upset. But when we enter upon the period of *Macbeth, King Lear, Othello, Julius Caesar*, we notice a wonderful change coming over him. The world does not appear to him now as being full of speculative amusing and wonder. It is on the other hand full of tremendous moral realities. The intellectual scepticism and meditativeness of the *Hamlet* period are now gone. Shakespeare seems to be standing face to face with a grim sense of reality. He is struggling in bitter strife. He is laying bare selfishness and jealousy, hatred and anguish. His mood deepens in *Cariolanus* and *Timon of Athens*. We find nothing but sadness, gloom and bitterness. Timon cries :—

"I am sick of this world, and will love naught."

This cry seems to be coming direct from Shakespeare's heart. But then soon we find clouds of darkness disappearing from Shakespeare's mental horizon. The sun of faith shines again. This mood is evident in *Cymbeline, Tempest* and *The Winter's Tale*. In the beginning of even these plays something of sternness appears, but it gradually softens and vanishes before the conclusion. In the *Tempest*, however, the mood of contemplative calmness and kindness

shines forth. Prospero's farewell to magic is Shakespeare's farewell to the stage and the world. Prospero says :—

"But this rough magic
I here abjure ; and when I have required,
Some heavenly music,—which even now I do,
To work mine end upon their senses, that,
This airy charm is far, I'll break my staff,
Bury it certain fathoms in the earth,
And deeper than did ever plummet sound,
I'll drown my book."

Prospero is no other than Shakespeare. He required 'some heavenly music' now and he had it.

NATURE AND CLASSIFICATION OF SHAKESPEARE'S PLAYS

Before considering the classification of Shakespeare's plays we should grasp the nature of his drama with a view to understand fully the grounds on which such a classification is generally made by critics.

1. **Neither Tragedies nor Comedies.** Shakespeare's plays are, according to Dr. Johnson, neither tragedies nor comedies, but compositions depicting inner nature, which shares the variously mixing goods, evils, joys and sorrows of the world, where the happy hastes to the wine and the mourner to tears. The ill-will of one is sometimes defeated by the other and where countless mischiefs or benefits are done or obstructed without plan.

2. **Mingled Drama.** Shakespeare has united laughter and sorrow in his plays. He represents these moods through distinctly sober and ridiculous characters, who in their turn inspire grief or pleasure. Rules of criticism do not allow this practice but nature does. The writing aims at instructing but poetry aims to instruct by pleasing. The fact that the mixed drama may impart all instruction

aimed to be imparted through the tragedies and comedies, cannot be contradicted because by showing how the great intrigues and small plans advance or obviate one another and how the high essentially co-operate with low in the world, the dramatist brings it nearer to life—a phenomenon which cannot be desirably depicted by either tragedy or comedy alone. Moreover, delight lies in variety rather than monotony. The objection that scenes interrupt the systematic representation of the progress of passion and that the development of the main theme being abruptly stopped, requires power to move again, is plausible but false. Changes of scenes at once desirably mould the passions. The fiction moves because attention can easily be transferred. Though the pleasing melancholy should not be interrupted by the unseasable jocularity, yet melancholy is not often pleasing. The delight lies in variety.

3. A Rough Division. Shakespeare's works were in the past divided roughly into comedies, tragedies and histories. The common ancient critics held that play to be a comedy which notwithstanding the serious and distressful intermediary incidents, ended happily to the principal persons. Again, such critics, notwithstanding the intermediary pleasure, were satisfied to hold a play as a tragedy if it ended in a catastrophe or disaster. Tragedy, according to their conception, required no more dignity or elevation than comedy itself. So any play could be turned into a tragedy or comedy by slight amendments in the concluding portions. History, which was not always distinct from tragedy could be dramatised without plan or limit because it was thought to be consisting of merely a series of independent events and actions with only a chronological order. It needed no regular conclusion and could, like *Antony and Cleopatra* or *Richard the Second*, be without unity of action. Shakespeare successfully attains his purpose of exciting pleasure or sorrow through all classes of his drama by employing his favourite method of introducing interchanging currents of seriousness and merriment without any loss of interest.

4. Immature Plays. In the earliest stage of Shakespeare's career we feel as if he is an apprentice experimenting his art in the great Workshop of Drama. The plays of this period show a certain amount of immaturity. This is not a new thing. Every writer shows such immaturity in earlier stages. The earliest plays of Shakespeare do not show the certainty of taste and execution, depth of thought and universality of outlook. He was not yet equipped with the required amount of experience. His early plays, such as *Love's Labour's Lost* and *Comedy of Errors* are only a series of amusing ineidents. Even in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* all characters are of approximately equal value and there is none for whom the audience longs when he is off the stage. These early plays definitely intended to provide amusement rather than deep and profound thought. There are no subtle character creations and no psychological problems in them. But even in his early productions we mark his perfect mastery over situations. Besides that there are glorious passages of magnificent blank verse. Anyhow, this was the nature of his plays during what Edward Dowden, a great critic, is pleased to call the 'Workshop period' when Shakesprare was just learning the use of his tools. These plays aimed at amusement and provided enough.

5. The Comedies. Then we come across some bright and brilliant comedies in which, too, Shakespeare introduces abundant amusing incidents to please his audiences. A natural improvement and advance is evident in these comedies We find enough of clowning and even farce side by side with higher forms of wit. One important point, which should be remembered in this connection, is that in all sorts of jokes, humorous and amusing pieces, Shakespeare appeals to higher intellect. He does not rely on mere clowning. In characterization of these comedies, we find a marked advance. It shows that Shakespeare had gained a deep knowledge of human nature. His characters, like Portia, Viola, Rosalind and a number of others have attained immortality due to his insight into human nature and unique creative gift. He appears to be a finished craftsman. The nature of his productions reveals that Shakespeare had now emerged

out into the world from his workshop. The change in Shakespeare's art had been gradual and imperceptible. Previously he was engaged in producing light-hearted and entertaining comedies such as *Twelfth Night*, and *As You Like It*, etc. Seriousness and melancholy which overtook the dramatist after 1600 is absent in these comedies. The grave and reflective aspects of life revealing terror and sadness and wreck of bright hopes on the rocks of adversity and destiny do not cast even a faint shadow over these comedies. Some critics have tried to argue that Shakespeare's transition from brilliant and happy comedies to gloomy and sad tragedies is the result of some deep loss or crushing misfortune which this dramatist might have met. They maintain that the cause of deep gloom and terror overshadowing his tragedies must have been either that he met with disappointment in love or disloyalty in friendship. Others maintain that as Shakespeare's plays *Twelfth Night, As You Like It, Much Ado About Nothing, Merchant of Venice* resemble one another in their character scheme, they might have been written for a company of actors which included two talented boys skilled in performing female roles such as Portia, Rosalind, Celia, etc. They argue that at that time Shakespeare had no suitable man to take up the roles of great heroes. The comedies of this period, therefore, are full of average characters suitable to be performed by young men and good comedians. This company was broken up after 1600 and a great tragic actor, named Richard Burbage, joined Shakespeare's company. He, therefore, set himself to write plays suiting to Burbage's character. The result was that plays life *Macbeth, Hamlet, Othello,* and *King Lear* appeared. The two theories referred above carry much significance, though neither is completely true. We may conclude that both are partially true for they in part explain the curious change coming over the temperament of Shakespeare.

6. **His Tragedies.** Thus, some mysterious cause diverted Shakespeare's attention towards tragedy. His tragedies have a certain family likeness. Each of Shakespearean tragedies is a story of a single character. It

happens that a man possessing the finest human virtues and enjoying high status in society has a single weakness of character, and that weakness proves deadly to him. Destiny and environment combine together to bring about countless misfortunes to that man mainly due to that single weakness and the play ends in terrible tragedy and disaster. Othello is noble and chivalrous, brave and just, but his great weakness is his jealousy which brings about his ruin. As in this case so in others, the whole plot revolves round one great and central figure. The other characters are subsidiary. Shakespeare does not allow them to attract the interest of the audience away from the commanding character of the hero. Generally the heroes of tragedy are very complex and unusual characters. Macbeth, Hamlet, Lear, and Othello are all in their nature complex. They misfit in life due to some of their weaknesses. They possess many fine human qualities, no doubt, but they commit either some sin or error which brings about gloom and misfortune to them. Error begets error and the tragic hero finds himself plunged in difficulties deeper and deeper. There is no question of recovering from the initial lapse. Shakespeare, says Turner, "has invested the career of all his tragic heroes, in their uninterrupted march towards disaster, with a certain air of inevitability." "We are conscious of powerful forces," remarks Turner, "which have engulfed them and are too strong to be resisted and feel that destiny is to blame, rather than the heroes themselves." Some critics maintain that Shakespeare's heroes are identical with those of the Greek tragedy in respect that they were always "blameless men ruined by jealous gods and hostile fate." These critics are wrong. The fact is that Shakespeare's heroes have the choice between right and wrong in the beginning. As the plot unfolds itself and circumstances develop these heroes commit some error of judgment and take some false step which moves the cycle of events towards a tragic end. "The great feature of the tragedies," says Turner, "is the hopelessness of the hero's plight. There is, at the end, no chance of repentance. There is no momentary hope that divine mercy may be expanded to the sinner, and

that he may be allowed to atone for his mistakes by future virtue. The punishment which comes upon him is inevitable and indiscriminating, not only the luckless hero, but even the innocent ones around him are swept to the doom that yawns in front. All the tragedies close on a note of despair and ruin. God sleeps. Dowden feels that Shakespeare's soul had sounded the very depths of human suffering and despair to lead him to produce such effective tragedies.

7. **Historical Plays.** Shakespeare has produced some plays, like *Macbeth*, which are more or less historical, dealing with the ancient history of Britain and of Rome. These are, in fact, "collections of events borrowed from history but connected together in respect of cause and time poetically and by dramatic fiction." To Shakespeare, the events themselves are immaterial. His concentration is always upon the spirit working behind them. In his historical plays he takes those parts of real history which are least known and then he sets himself to infuse in them a principle of life. The same events when presented in the form of plays appear to be fitted in the framework of an animated whole. His aim is to give us a historical view of an age in living shape and form.

8. **Romantic Dramas.** Just after the tragic period Shakespeare's art seems to be undergoing a marked change. This change exhibited itself in his plays like *Cymbeline* and *A Winter's Tale*. Shakespeare seems to be impressed by the new style of Beaumont and Fletcher, his contemporary dramatists, who produced plays in which "a startling and excessive responsibility was laid on coincidence, on dramatic and unexpected change of situation by divine intervention." Shakespeare turned his attention to this new style. He set the unities at defiance even more than usual. We see a series of dramatic incidents merging into one another than a compact and unified plot. There is generally a sudden and unexpected turn of events at the very end which saves these plays from ending into tragedy. Thus such plays cannot be called tragedies because they end happily. Again, they cannot be called

comedies either because they contain events of such gravity as the cutting off of the head of a noble character. Hence, a compromise, name has been sought for such plays. They are usually designated as 'Romantic dramas.' Critics are of opinion that Shakespeare has not been able to justify his departure from the 'straight path.' We find a looseness of structure in these plays and that looseness has not been made up by him even through brilliant characterisation and poetic skill. The critics remark that Shakespeare defied the unities and as a result lost the harmony, unity and finish which distinguished plays like *Hamlet* and *Othello*. Some critics defend Shakespeare. They say that "the greatest difference between those dramas and the tragedies which had preceded them is in the atmosphere." They finish "with complete and Christian-like forgiveness of enemies." Shakespeare attained to a loftier and more serene outlook on life. The final play, *The Tempest*, has been called Shakespeare's farewell to his art. It has been described as showing 'the splendour of sunset.' In this play Shakespeare has shown to the critics that he could be completely classical by complying with all the three unities of time, place and action. The atmosphere, characterisation and general outlook, however, prove that this play belongs completely to the romantic dramas.

Dowden classifies Shakespeare's plays as follows :—

Comedies

(**1**) *Love's Labour's Lost* (1590), (**2**) *Comedy of Errors* (1591), (**3**) *Two Gentlemen of Verona* (1592—93), (**4**) *Midsummer Night's Dream* (1593—1594), (**5**) *Merchant of Venice* (1596), (**6**) *Taming of the Shrew* (1597), (**7**) *Merry Wives of Windsor* (1598), (**8**) *Much Ado About Nothing* (1598), (**9**) *As You Like It* (1599), (**10**) *Twelfth Night* (1600—01), (**11**) *All's Well that Ends Well* (1601—02), (**12**) *Measure for Measure* (1603), (**13**) *Troilus and Cressida* (1603), (**14**) *Tempest* (1610), (**15**) *Winter's Tale* (1610—1611).

Tragedies

(**1**) *Titus Andronicus* (1588—90), (**2**) *Romeo and Juliet* (1596—97), (**3**) *Julius Caesar* (1601). (**4**) *Hamlet* (1602), (**5**) *Othello* (1604), (**6**) *Lear* (1605), (**7**) *Macbeth* (1605), (**8**) *Antony and Cleopatra* (1607).

Histories

(**1**) *Henry VI* Part I (1590—91), (**2**) *Henry VI* Parts II and III (1591—92), (**3**) *Richard II* (1591), (**4**) *Richard III* (1593), (**5**) *King John* (1593), (**6**) *Henry IV* Parts I and II (1597—98), (**7**) *Henry V* (1599), (**8**) *Henry VIII* (1612—13).

Romances

(**1**) *Pericles* (1608), (**2**) *Cymbeline* (1609), (**3**) *Tempest* (1610), (**4**) *Winter's Tale* (1610—11).

CHIEF FEATURES OF SHAKESPEAREAN DRAMA

1. **Shakespeare's Art**. That Shakespeare has outlived his century is the proof of his literary merits. His works possess neither vanity nor malignity but a stimulus to international pleasure. A natural representation only may excite prolonged pleasure because the mind can repose in truth. Shakespeare is a poet of nature. His characters move by universal passions and are not individuals but species.

2. **Mirror of Life.** Shakespeare's plays are instructive and wide in scope. They contain practical truth, domestic wisdom and a system of civil and economical prudence. He excellently accommodates ideas to the real age. Unlike others his dialogue is natural and topics real. On common stage love is the chief moving force but a realistic poet knows how other passions cause happiness or calamity. Moreover, his characters, though varied, are distinct and the speech of none can be properly transferred

to another. His characters are neither over nor under-drawn like those of other dramatists. He has no heroes but ordinary men acting and speaking in a most natural way. Even the supernatural dialogue is levelled with life. Consequently, Shakespeare's plays contain human sentiments in human language, possess qualities of universal appeal and are the mirror of life.

3. Interchange of Laughter and Sadness. His plays are neither tragedies nor comedies but compositions depicting inner nature, which shares the variously mixing good and evil joys and sorrows of the world. According to customary rules some of the ancient poets selected sorrowful and others chose pleasant events of life and thus built up tragedies and comedies which were sharply distinct from each other. Shakespeare, on the other hand, has united laughter and sorrow in his compositions. The fact that the mixed drama may impart all instructions of tragedies and comedies cannot be contradicted, because it comes nearer to life than either tragedy or the comedy. The changes of scenes do neither interrupt the progress of passions and the main theme nor do require force to desirably mould the passions but are pleasing because delight lies in variety.

4. Unconventional. The players roughly divided Shakespeare's plays into comedies, tragedies and histories. The action ending happily to the principal persons was taken to form a comedy and an ending disastrously was treated to form a tragedy. They did not at all take into account the intermediary incidents to determine the two. History, indistinct from tragedy, was unplanned dramatisation of a series of independent actions in chronological order without conclusion or unity of action. Shakespeare did not abide by conventions and nothing unconventional injures his dramatic scheme. He successfully excites pleasure or sorrow by interesting interchange of sadness and pleasure.

5. Repose in Comic. Without imitable precepts, Shakespeare wrote at a time when the rules of criticism

and public judgment was not mature. His natural disposition led him to write unsurpassed comedies. While he wrote his skilful tragedies with labour and study, his comic scenes, even after the changes during one century, possess the same force due to their natural, lasting and genuine qualities of characterisation.

6. **Dialogue**. Shakespeare picks up his comic dialogue from the real conversation which is above coarseness and below refinement and may be defined as basically established style of a nation. So he is attractive to the present age as one of the original masters of the English language. Though soft and polished, his dialogue is, however, occasionally rough and difficult, and action sometimes unnatural and improbable.

7. **Illusion**. While criticising Shakespeare in connection with the question of illusion, his critics forget that a representation can never be mistaken for a reality. One who can believe himself at Alexandria may believe even more than that. An hour may be taken for a century by the power of the brain which makes the stage what it is not.

8. **Plots**. Shakespeare borrowed his plots from most popular novels so that the people could follow his plays through their intricate complexities. He borrowed history from chronicles and ballads and the lives of the ancient writers from various translations. His interesting plots are packed with incidents attractive to the illiterate people, and his plays give pleasure to the ear as well as to the eye.

While other poets exhibit artistic curiosities, Shakespeare opens a mine containing treasures of unpolished gold and diamonds mixed up with baser minerals.

SOME QUALITIES OF SHAKESPEARE

Shakespeare possessed some outstanding qualities of unique nature, which ultimately lifted up to those elava-

tions in the poetic and dramatic field from where all ancient and modern artists looked small. He was specially gifted with genius in the first instance. To add to that, he was endowed with the quality of sentimental transcendentalism. He had unparallel insight into characters which gave to his pen a magic power and realistic charm.

1. Shakespeare's Genius. Dryden, in course of his appreciation of Shakespeare, says, "He was the man who of all modern, and perhaps ancient, poets had the largest and most comprehensive soul. All the images of nature were still present to him, and he drew them not laboriously, but luckily ; when he describes anything you more than see it, you feel it too." As a man of genius Shakespeare stands supreme. He is at once the greatest and the most popular of writers. His ability and genius is revealed by the fact that even to-day he carries in his work a universal appeal. The greatest credit which Shakespeare enjoys is due to his aspect of amiability. He has something for everybody. No writer in the history of the world had such intimate knowledge of the human heart. He has the faculty of laying bare to his readers their own souls. He can give expression to their most diverse moods in a realistic manner. He possesses the power of probing of human passions. A critic, Long, remarks that to study nature in Shakespeare's work is "like exploring a new and beautiful country ; to study man in his works is like going into a great city, viewing the motley crowd as one views a great masquerade in which past and present mingle freely and familiarly, as if the dead were living again." Another critic says, "I do not remember that any book or person or event in my life ever made so great an impression upon me as the plays of Shakespeare." Dryden, in his thesis entitled *Dramatic Poesie,* says that it cannot be claimed that Shakespeare is "everywhere alike ; were it so, I should do him injury to compare him with the greatest of mankind. He is many times flat, insipid ; his comic wit generating into cleches, his serious swelling into bombast. But he is always great when some great occasion is

presented to him; no man can say he ever had a fit subject for his wit, and did not, then, raise himself as high above the rest of the poets." Shakespeare's genius is unlimited. He has an unimitable gift of song. To express the vast scale of human experiences he is equipped with a corresponding variety of style. He is master of word-music. In the opinion of a critic, "he has caught up the sentiment that finds an echo in every breast, and has clothed them with the rainbow and pearl of his divine utterance." Coleridge in his *Biographia Literaria* says, "The greatest genius, that, perhaps, human nature has yet produced, is our myriad-minded Shakespeare." However, it cannot be denied that Shakespeare received remarkable assistance from his circumstances in achieving his greatness. If he had not lived in the time and environments which rendered his work easier, he might have not reached those heights of literary glory on which we see him today. There was another factor working in favour of Shakespeare. He was lucky enough in this respect that his predecessors provided him with plot. He was fortunate to have been born in an age when drama happened to be the chief literary form. No other form of literature was in his age more fitted to give adequate expression to his thorough knowledge of the mysteries of the human mind and character, People possess luxuriant imaginations. They were thrilled at the sound of poetry. It was, therefore, easier for Shakespeare to give vent to the thoughts and feelings of the people of his age in beautiful language. Thus, in order to fully appreciate the height, depth and width of Shakespear's genius, we have to appreciate first the forces and the environments which assisted him in the development of his inborn faculties.

2. **Sentimental Transcendentalism.** Commenting on Shakespeare's humanity, Robertson says that the quality which he admires in Shakespeare is his love for all human beings. He possesses sentimental transcendentalism. Shakespeare shoots up above the limitations of time and space. He possesses true humanity and,

therefore, his earthly coarseness in pardonable. So realistic is he that he never leaves earth. It has to be refined. He is immeasurably greater than Shelley because although Shelley was sublimer than Shakespeare he lacked the humanity of his nature and heart. Instead of putting forth any philosophical theory, Shakespeare prefers to play the role of a true artist. His conception of art seems to be that it should provide joy and consultation. He appears to believe in that imaginative expression of human feelings which tends to reconcile the individual with the universal by exciting in him impersonal emotions. Art may not directly aim at reformation but it must cast an enlarging influence on the minds of the people. He extends his sympathies to all. His art is primarily the art stamped with universal sympathy and sentimental transcendentalism.

3. Insight into Character. Shakespeare is one of the greatest character-builders. According to Lord Macaulay Shakespeare's works nre marked by variety of characters. This variety is like the variety of nature. It consists of an endless diversity. Shakespeare's characters leave highly vivid impressions upon our minds; we feel these impressions to be so living, so realistic as we have of our own associates. Not even one character of Shakespeare deviates widely from the common standard. Every character has one ruling passion. That serves as a clue and unravels all the mysteries of his conduct. Shakespeare sees man through a crowd of passions. He tears the mystery of these passions and lays the real human character bare before us. In the opinion of George Meredith, "Shakespeare is a well-spring of characters which are saturated with the comic spirit; with more of what we will call blood-life than is to be found anywhere out of Shakespeare; and they are not of this world, but they are of a world enlarged to our embrace by imagination, and by great poetic imagination." The characters of personalities being general and numerous are never so distinct elsewhere as in Shakespeare, says Dr. Johnson. He remarks that as there are many

characters which possess no special inherent peculiarity, he is not ready to agree with Pope in his opinion that every speech of Shakespeare's characters could be assigned to one proper speaker. It may, however, he admitted that while some speeches may be adopted to every speaker, none can properly be transferred from one to another, just because their choice is reasonable and right. So deep is the insight of Shakespeare into characters that the basic elements composing the nature and temperament of all his prominent characters are distinct. He possesses "god-like intelligence," claims Morton-Luce in his book *Shakespeare and His Contemporaries*. This intelligence "sees through the whole of human life and, therefore, smiles serenely on its tears.

4. **His Flavour**. An essential attribute of every work of art is that impalpable quality which may be termed as 'flavour.' "It is," in Galsworthy's words, "the thin, poignant spirit which hovers up out of a play and is as much its differentiating essence as caffein is of coffee." Flavour is the 'spirit of the dramatist projected into his work in a state of volatility. This distinctive essence of a play, marking its brand, is the one thing at which the dramatist cannot work, for it is outside his consciousness." In Shakespeare's works this flavour is present to the highest degree. The reason why Shakespeare's plays carry so much appeal is that there is a peculiar atmosphere, special tone and unique melody all of which combine together to give a delicious flavour to them

5. **Condensed Brevity**. Shakespeare does never let his characters indulge in extravagant and lengthy talk. In moments of supreme crisis Shakespeare employs highly condensed and brief dialogue. Other dramatists lose themselves in lengthy dialogue in intensely emotional situations. Shakespeare depicts emotional intensity in a few sentences. This aspect of Shakespeare's art is most reasonable becanse psychologically speaking intense emotions cannot be adequately exposed in words. Short

and significant words serve the purpose of ventilating deep stirring and intense feelings. There are occasions when his characters have feelings but they cannot express them. They utter only some significant phrases which have the value and effect of lengthiest lectures.

6. **Creation of Atmosphere.** Shakespeare is very skilful in creating tragic or comic atmospheres. His power and artistic craftsmanship may be judged from the fact that he maintains in a unique way a characteristic spirit in his plays which continues to develop and dominate the whole scheme of action as a play proceeds towards its climax and the ultimate conclusion. This spirit pervades his play to perform a very important function—it aids in making the play a harmonious whole notwithstanding the intermediary incidents. As a matter of fact, while Shakespeare breaks the laws of unity, he regains perfect unity in his plays by building up a systematically peculiar atmosphere which develops in perfect harmony and conformity with the trends of events, nature of the play and the ultimate fate of the main characters.

A SURVEY OF SHAKESPEARE'S WORLD

Shakespeare's dramatic world is a world of realism. It is a world of lights and shades, of sorrows and happiness, of love and romance, of bitter struggles and tragic disasters. On the Shakespearean stage the heart of the actual world is dissected and laid before us wherein we see soft as well as fiery emotions working through their pleasant and terribly intricate mazes.

1. **A Typical Figure.** In course of a criticism on Shakespeare Mark Van Doren, a modern critic, claims that this dramatist had too much poetry, and—the same thing for him—too much sense, to be the slave of fashion in human beings. He is typical of any world that can be understood, and is the kind of story-teller who can

be judged by the most general standards we have. The "Poetics" of Aristotle will explain him. It is difficult enough for such literature to explain itself; nor does Shakespeare seem to call for explanations beyond those which a whole heart and a free mind abundantly supply.

2. **Creator of Many Worlds**. Continuing his criticism Doren says that the great and central virtue of Shakespeare was not achieved by taking thought, for thought cannot create a world. It can only understand one when one has been created. Shakespeare, starting with the world no man has made, and never indeed abandoning it, made many worlds within it. Some of them are more interesting than others, and a few of them are merely sketched; but each of them tends to be internally consistent, immediately knowable, and—at the same time that it is familiar—permanently fresh and strange. He may never have said to himself that this was what he had done, and if he talked to himself at all there were other excuses for congratulations. As a poet, considering the term in the narrower, verbal sense which is its commonest meaning now, he had written so well that any kind of poetry and any kind of prose can be found in him at its best. This has its lasting importance, being one of the reasons that the words used have become so widely known. But a reason of deeper importance is the context of those words in the worlds they helped to make.

3. **Miracle of Creation.** How these worlds come into being cannot by plainly said. If it could be, the criticism of Shakespeare would at once reach an end. Criticism grows desperate from time to time and denies their existence. Shakespeare was merely a poet, a word-magician; or merely a carpenter of plays; or merely an Elizabethan; or merely a man who wrote for money. He was all those things and more things like them, but to be satisfied with saying so is to be thrown off the scent of his distinction. At the opposite extreme criticism grows fanatical in the definition of devices by which the

miracle of creation was performed ; performance assumed, the investigator looks for tricks.

4. Style. The styles of Shakespeare are studied—the styles, for it is true that he had no style, no special way of writing beyond the way of writing well, and that he is not to be imitated except by one who will say things both as clearly and as interestingly as he did.

5. Devices. But his success is not a matter of devices ; or if so, they are secondary to a larger method which ordered them instinctively to the ends of unity and delight. The unity of any play is not alone a matter of images, though the coherence of its metaphors may be amazing ; or of diction and syntax, though the monosyllables of *Julius Caesar* and the involutions of *The Winter's Tale* have much to do with the natures of their respective universes ; or of atmosphere, though the difference between the environment of "Lear" and the environment of "Antony and Cleopatra" is so palpable that one may well become lost in the exercise of feeling it ; or of character, though Shakespears's people live for ever ; or of plot, though he is inimitable at story-telling.

6. Unity of Being. Beyond all these, worthy of study and praise as of course they are, there is in any of the successful plays a created or creature life, a unity of being which reveals itself with every step of our progress into its interior.

7. A Secret. It is literally true that while we read a play of Shakespeare we are in it. We may be drawn in swiftly or slowly—in most cases it is swiftly—but once we are there we are enclosed. That is the secret, and it is still a secret, of Shakespeare's power to interest us. He conditions us to a particular world before we are aware that it exists ; then he absorbs us in its particulars. We scarcely say to ourselves, this world exists ; nor do we pause to note how consistent each thing in it is with every

other. Our attention is on the details, which we take in as details should be taken in, one at a time. Meanwhile there is for us no other world. The great world is not forgotten—Shakespeare indeed knows best how to keep us reminded of its greatness—but it is here confined to a single mode of its being.

8. **The Truth**. He is not telling the whole truth in any play, nor does he do so in all of them together, nor could he have done so had he written ten thousand. But the piece of truth with which he is occupied at a given moment is for that moment eloquent both of itself and of the remainder. It seems to be all. It is satisfactory and complete. With each new line a play of Shakespeare's lights its own recesses, deepens its original hue, echoes, supports, and authenticates itself. The world is not there, but this part of it is so entirely there that we miss nothing; it is as if existence had decided to measure itself by a new standard. And the secret of that standard is shared with us. Shakespeare, who denies his reader nothing, denies him least of all the excitement of feeling that he is where things are simply and finally alive.

9. **An Artist**. Only a remarkable artist could have done this, and only a remarkable man—a man, moreover, in whom the balance was well nigh perfect between understanding and observation, between intellect and instinct, between vision and sight.

10. **Characters**. It has long been recognized that his characters, while irreducibly individual, partake of that nature which belongs to all men, and seldom desert the types in whose terms they were conceived. Hamlet is young, melancholy, courteous, brilliant, and moral. Falstaff is old, fat, drunken, untruthful, and witty. None of those traits is new, and it would almost appear that nothing in either man had been invented by Shakespeare. Each, however, has his unique carriage and voice, and will not be mistaken for any other man on earth. He is first of all a member of the human race. After that he is

himself, saying things which Shakespeare knows how to envelop in a silence so natural that for the time being we hear no other sound than that of his discourse. Yet the act of being himself never takes him beyond the range of our understanding. We hear him with our ears and we see him with our eyes, but he is most valuable to us because we can think about him with all the mind we possess. He is not that monstrous thing, an individual undefined, any more than Shakespeare's worlds are irresponsible constructions or any more than Shakespeare's poetry is idiot-pure.

11. Poetry. Sometimes this poetry struts on cumbrous wings when it should go by foot, but seldom is it being written for its own sake, as if poetry were the most precious thing in the world. To Shakespeare it was apparently not that. The world was still more precious—the great one he never forgot, and the little one in which he knew how to imprison its voice and body. What he dealt in was existence, and his dealings were responsible, high-hearted, and humane.

12. His World—Rich and Clear. The reader who places himself in his hands will not be protected from any experience, but he will be safe from outrage because he will always know his bearings. What is supposed to happen in Shakespeare's plays does happen ; and what has happened anywhere cannot be finally hated. Shakespeare loved the world as it is. That is why he understood it so well ; and that in turn is why, being the artist he was, he could make it over again into something so rich and clear.

ORIGIN AND NATURE OF TRAGEDY

1. Definition. Etymologically speaking the term tragedy is derived from the Greek word 'Tragose' which means a 'goat.' Originally, therefore, the term signified a 'goat-song.' The actors in a 'tragedy' used to wear 'goat-skins' and therefore the goat has come to be associated with tragedy. In medieval England, however, the term

tragedy was used to denote 'a story, whether in verse or prose, of exceptional suffering and misfortune.' It was not till about the beginning of the Elizbethan Age that the term gained specific meaning by its application to drama alone. Aristotle in his book *Poetics*, from which the principles of dramatic theory and criticism have been derived, defines tragedy thus: "Tragedy is the representation of an action, which is serious, complete, and of a certain limited length, expressed in speech made beautiful in different ways in different parts of the play (*e.g.*, verse, song, prose, etc.); it is acted, not merely narrated; and by exciting pity and fear provides a proper purgation of these emotions." We may understand the term, tragedy, to denote "a dramatic representation of a certain action, serious, complete and of limited length with the purgation of the emotions of pity and fear being its function."

2. **The Hero in Tragedy.** Generally the tragedy revolved round a man of high status and prosperity. The action advanced through the sufferings of such a hero who gradually fell into misery and met with ultimate ruin and disaster. In Greek and medieval European tragedies, the tragic hero was usually a king or a prince. It was so because in those days men of that status were regarded as symbols of the fate of a whole nation. The appearance of a king on the stage filled the spectators with a feeling of awe and mystery. The serious action in a tragedy was required to produce pity and fear in the minds of the audiences. Men of high characters and positions were shown as being subjected to calamities because such sufferings befalling to men of such high status thrilled the public with a sense of pettiness of man and his endeavours. The scenes of the fall of a noble character overwhelmed the minds with a sense of Destiny and helplessness of man. Chaucer's conception of tragedy was not different from the ancient Greek conception explained above. According to Aristotle, however, a tragic hero is "a man who is not eminently good and just, yet whose misfortune is brought about not by vice or depravity, but by some *error* or *frailty*." Thus, his conception was that the tragic hero need not be perfect. He must be a man possessed of noble

qualities, no doubt, but there must, at the same time, be present some weakness which might serve as the basis of tragic development of action. The flaw or weakness, which is to serve as the cause of his destruction, need neither be conscious nor moral. Thus, it is not necessary that a tragic hero may have the purity of soul, He must, however, have an intensity of character. He should be neither whol y virtuous nor an utter villain, because if he is absolutely perfect his sufferings will, instead of exciting the feelings of pity and fear, simply cause a shock, while if he is a villain his sufferings will produce the feelings of relief and satisfy the sense of justice. The responsibility of tragedy needs to be attributed to some defect in the noble character of the hero. It may be ambition, as in *Macbeth*, indecision as in *Hamlet*, pride as in *Coriolanus*. It should be on account of such one strong tendency that these otherwise noble and great persons may come to grief and ruin. The defect or error may, sometimes, be absolutely unconscious to give the reader an impression that the human life is governed and controlled by a blind Fate or Chance. Now, such type of 'unconscious tragic frailty' is un-Shakespearean. In Shakespearean tragedy the tragic frailty is conscious. The Shakespearean hero seems to be responsible, to a certain degree, for his own ruin. In Shakespeare's plays a man's character seems to be his destiny. There are some instances in which characters appear to be flawless and yet they are made to pass through extreme suffering. Romeo, Juliet, Desdemona, Antigore all suffer without any fault of their own. Such cases are more pathetic than tragic. "Aristotle," says a critic, "excluded this type as being generally unsuitable for tragedy," "A character," says he, "may be wicked or evil and it may still be impressive and tragic. What is required is a certain grandeur of the soul like that of Cleopatra or Shakespeare's Richard III, something brilliant and elevated, so that while we condemn the moral, the evil or the wickedness, we still admire the strength of the hero and the intensity of his character. The morally trivial, rather than the morally bad, is fatal to tragic effect." In Greek as well as the

Elizabethan drama, the tragic hero has invaribly some flaws in his character. He is no longer a person of great eminence. The one great difference between the old and modern dramatists of our age is that while the former rested the foundation of the whole structure on the character of a hero, the latter do not, that is to say, the modern tragedy is heroless. The modern dramatists, like Shaw and Galsworthy, deal with the miseries and disappointments of ordinary human beings who suffer due to some evils and defects in social or political systems. Thus, the hero in a modern play, like Galsworthy's *Justice*, is not an individual, but the system of justice. In Elizabethan drama the concentration is upon the characters of the individuals and not on the nature of 'systems.' We will discuss in more details the conception and method of Shakespeare with regard to the tragedy later on, but first of all we should understand what is the function of a tragedy.

3. **The Function of Tragedy**. According to Aristotle, the function of tragedy is to effect a purgation of emotions of pity and fear. The one great function of art is to effect an alleviation of man's overcharged emotions. When we are witnessing the sufferings of an impressive personage, "we are placed at an ideal distance from the hero." Thus, the pressure of reality is removed and our emotions are universalised. In such circumstances we begin to recognise, in the sufferings of the hero, the universal woes of humanity. Our emotions are thus purged, alleviated and purified.

This was the primary function of tragedy according to Aristotle. The secondary function of tragedy in the opinion of Aristotle is that it should produce a sense of pleasure. This pleasure is not 'sadistic' as believed by the French philosopher, Rousseau. Rousseau maintained that as such a pleasure arises from watching of another person's suffering, it is necessarily 'sadistic' in its nature. Schopenhauer suggested that this pleasure results from the realisation of the worthlessness of human endeavour and was, therefore, 'pessimistic.' This con-

ception is again erroneous. The pleasure that we feel by witnessing a piece of art, like a well-built tragedy, does in fact arise out of the enlargement of our experience. Tragedy is a mirror of life and the pleasure is derived from experiencing a true representation of life in a tragedy through artistic mediums. As a tragedy satisfies our longing for true experience, it serves for us as a source of pleasure.

Conflict is the soul of tragedy. The essence of all tragedy is a struggle—"the struggle of man against something higher and stronger which crushes him in the end." The Greeks presented the struggle of man against Fate—blind cruel Fate. But Shakespeare, on the other hand, believes that man has to struggle "either against circumstance beyond his control or against his own divided self." Thus the struggle and conflict which has to form the theme and build up the atmosphere of a tragedy of Shakespeare may be of two kinds—(1) External or (2) Internal. *Macbeth*, which we are going to study in the following pages, is a tragedy based on interal conflict and not a conflict with fate. But this is a bit controversial and we reserve it for a more proper occasion.

SHAKESPEAREAN TRAGEDY

Shakespeare did not write any of his plays to preach a moral. He paints conflicts—the conflicts of the soul, of personal ambitions, envy, patriotism, circumstances, etc. The medieval mind, as we have discussed above, conceived a tragedy to represent "a totpl reverse of fortune, coming unawares upon a man who 'stood in high degree' happy and apparently secure" in society. Shakespeare's genius rebelled against the slavish intimation of old conceptions and conventions which clashed against reality, logic or the ideals of his own age.

1. **Substance of Shakespearean Tragedy.** Shakespearean tragedy is generally concerned with persons of

'high degree' like kings, princes or leaders of men. Shakespeare brings a considerable number of persons in his tragedy, but it is primarily the story of one person, the 'hero,' or at the most two, if we include the 'heroine.' The story then passes through various stages leading to the death of the hero. The end of a Shakespearean tragedy is invariably the death of the principal character from which we may evolve out a rule that "no play in which the hero remains alive is, in the Shakespearean sense, a tragedy." On this ground *Cymbeline* cannot be classed as a pure tragedy. Again, "an instantaneous or accidental death of the main character, would not suffice for labelling a play as a tragedy." Such a story may be considered only as a "tale of suffering and calamity conducing to death" and not as a strict tragedy in the Shakespearean sense. The suffering and calamity in Shakespeare's tragedy are of exceptional nature. They befall a high personage, are unexpected and "stand in contrast with previous happiness." Yet another essential ingredient in Shakespearean tragedy is that the suffering and calamity referred above, extends far and wide so as to make the whole scene, a scene of woe and disaster as we find in *Macbeth.*

2. **Nature of Calamity.** In Shakespearean tragedy the calamities do not fall like 'a bolt from the blue' as is generally marked in ancient tragedies. Shakespearean calamities "proceed mainly from the actions of the characters in a story." What generally happens in Shakespeare's tragedies is this ! 'A number of human beings are placed in certain circumstances. They are brought into contact with one another. From this contact arise certain actions which lead to a series of inter-connected actions all ultimately drifting towards a catastrophic end. The principal characters do always contribute, in some measure, to the disaster in which most of the characters of the play perish. The whole of Shakspearean tragedy is a piece of finely and logically interwoven actions issuing from characters or else, as in some other cases, it is a piece of finely built characters issuing from interconnected actions. It means that if the play is a play of action the

centre lies in action but if it is a play of character the centre lies in character. Anyhow, the calamity falls on the hero or the principal characters and the play ends in disaster. There must be a marked contrast between the befalling calamity and the previous glory. A tale of some natural sorrow, loss or pain, of disease, poverty, petty persecutions or sordid vices, do not fall in the category of sufferings suitably forming themes for tragedies in the Shakespearean sense. The calamities in Shakespearean tragedy do not happen simply. They are the result of a series of complicated actions. Again they are not sent by any supernatural power. They proceed, on the other band, mainly from the actions of men. As has been explained above the men bring the sufferings upon themselves by their own conduct. The hero contributes to disaster and perishes. Thus men are themselves authors of their own woe. The essence of a Shakespearean tragedy is, therefore, conscious voluntary action resulting in a series of actions and reactions, all expressive of character. Sometimes, such actions are produced which are not dependent on man's own character.

3. Additional Factors. Shakespeare develops a tragedy by introducing some factors which need consideration. These factors are given below :—

(*a*) **Abnormal Mental Condition.** Sometimes, abnormal conditions of mind appear to be one of the factors of development of a tragedy. We find insanity in Lear, somnambulism in Lady Macbeth who walks in sleep and hallucination in Macbeth himself on account of which he sees a dagger in the air. The deeds resulting from such conditions cannot be regarded as expressive of characters. It is, therefore, that Shakespeare does not let the deeds resulting from abnormal mental conditions exercise an influence on the events following from them. The condition of Macbeth's or his Lady's mind is, therefore, not the cause of tragic conflict. It is the result of such conflict.

(*b*) **Supernatural element.** Shakespeare does also introduce supernatural elements in some of his tragedies.

Ghosts and witches who have supernatural knowledge appear to influence the development of tragedy. Witches in *Macbeth* as the Ghost in *Hamlet* contribute to the action to a certain extent. On this ground, human character and circumstances cannot be described as the soul motive force in the action. It should, however, be kept in mind that the supernatural element is given a subordinate position in Shakespeare. It is closely connected with the character to confirm its inner movements. In *Hamlet* we find that the hero has a suspicion in his mind regarding the murder of his father. The Ghost of his murdered father appears and gives a distinct and definite form to that suspicion. Macbeth is ambitious. The witches give a definite form to his ambitions. We will discuss such aspects of *Macbeth* later on.

(*c*) **Chance or Accident.** Shakespeare allows the chance or accident to exercise appreciable influence in his tragedies. We recognize chance as an important factor in human life. The fact is, that if the element of chance or accident is excluded from a tragedy, it will become, in some circumstances, quite unnatural. It was a mere accident that Desdemona dropped her hadkerchief at the most fatal moment of her life. It was again an accident that Romeo never got the Friar's message about the potion and Juliet did not awake from her long sleep a minute sooner. It should, however, be remembered that Shakespeare uses chance or accident in his tragedies very sparingly, because if it is given much scope it may destroy the whole effect. The casual connection between character, deed and catastrophe will disappear altogether if chance is introduced in a large degree.

4. Conflict. All action in Shakespearean tragedy proceeds from conflict which is of two kinds :—

(*a*) **External.** The conflict which forms the basis of tragedy may be an outward or external conflict between two parties or groups with the hero as a leading figure. It may be sometimes between two passions or ideals animating two persons or groups. Such conflict brings

about the ultimate defeat of the hero. This conflict is so developed by Shakespeare that the play is made highly interesting and dramatic.

(*b*) **Internal**. The conflict in Shakespearean tragedy is sometimes internal. It is within the heart of the hero. In tragedies of such conflict the inward struggle going on in the very soul of the hero is depicted. It is from this sort of conflict that Macbeth and Lady Macbeth suffer. In *Hamlet* and *Othello*, the real conflict lies within the minds of the central figures. "The hero is torn by an internal struggle, his entire being divided into two. He struggles against this clash. The conflict of forces in the hero's soul shows Shakespeare's most extraordinary powers of heigtening the tragic effect."

5. The Principal Character. As it has been emphasized earlier, the hero in Shakespearean tragedy is an exceptional being. He is a person of high degree, noble qualities or of public importance. His actions or sufferings are of unusual kinds. His nature, too, is exceptional. It raises him in a way much above the average man. It does not, however, mean that he is unreal or eccentric. It should be remembered that Shakespearean tragic characters have all the qualities of an average human being. He is raised above the average by an intensification of life which he shares with others. Macbeth, Othello and Lear are built on a grand scale. Desire, passion or will attains in them a terrible force. These characters have a marked one-sidedness or a strong predisposition in some particular direction. As critics remark, the tragic hero is possessed by a *fatal tendency to identify* the whole of his being with *one* interest, object, passion or habit of mind. Such are the fundamental tragic traits in Shakespearean heroes. The frailty of such proves to be a fatal gift. At the same time it imparts a touch of greatness to the hero's character. When it is combined with nobility, as in Brutus, or genius as in Cleopatra, the conflict which engrosses it acquires a magnitude which produces a sense of pity mixed with admiration and awe. The Shakespearean hero commits an error by

precipitation or by omission and thus contributes to his own ultimate disaster. This disaster is not the simple and the sole result of external forces. The Shakespearean hero has some fatal imperfection. He is never flawless. Some have this imperfection to a lesser degree and some to a greater. Again such an imperfection is not always of the same kind in all his heroes. Thus, it may be the jealousy of Othello, the dreamy idealism of Richard II or the precipitancy of Romeo. Shakespearean tragic hero is generally but not necessarily and invarialy a good character. Macbeth acts in a manner which he himself recognizes to be villainous. Thus, the frailty is conscious. Others, however, are not vividly conscious of it.

6. Other Characteristics. One question which must be determined is as to what is the ultimate power leading an action to a tragic disaster. Is it the pessimistic view of life, the helplessness of man or the disturbance of the balance of the moral order or again a passion for perfection ? Hamlet's words, "Our thoughts are our's, their ends none of our own," is a pessimistic view of life. According to this theory man is at the mercy of a blind chance or an evil power. In such circumstances he has no control over the results of his actions which ultimately lead to tragedy. The hero in such cases acts freely and yet he is blind. Brutus contrives for the misery of his own country and Iago spins a web for others. Both meet disaster. Hamlet does not want but is forced to take revenge. This shows the utter helplessness of man. Thus pessimism, blind chance and evil power sometimes mould the trend of affection in Shakespearean tragedy. Besides that Shakespeare has a great sense of the moral order in the universe. This order is based on good and is aloof from evil. It is a balance or harmony governing the human action. We find in the tragedies of Shakespeare this balance of harmony being disturbed by temporary triumph of evil. This harmony has to be regained by eliminating the evil. The moral order has strong imclination for perfection. According to the law of nature everything that is not perfect will perish. Shakespearean hero perishes because he has some imperfection. In the struggle for perfection

glorious good is born no doubt but evil is born side by side. This evil has to be overcome only by self-torture and self-waste. This self-torture and self-waste is the subject-matter of some of the Shakespearean tragedies.

THE SUPERNATURAL IN SHAKESPEARE

Superstition had still a hold on the minds of the Elizabethan people. Shakespeare's audiences were impressed by the appearance of supernatural beings, such as ghosts, witches and fairies, on the stage. Shakespeare was naturally impressed by the disposition and temperament of the people of his age. Moreover, he had to keep in view the special interests of his audience who were stirred by scenes wherein unearthly and superhuman beings came into action. It is idle to speculate whether Shakespeare did himself believe in ghosts. The more important point to remember is that in Shakespeare's day the supernatural was recognised as an effective instrument of dramatic art. Shakespeare worked it through his various plays, like *Macbeth*, in a highly artistic manner. The various forms in which the supernatural beings appear in his plays should now be considered.

1. **Fairies.** Shakespeare's fairydom is wonderful. We find flower-covered fields, secluded spots of Nature and forests, etc., of this kingdom peopled with sportive elves, spirits and fairies, feeding on moonlight, music and fragrance. It is a place where Nature herself is preternatural and where everything is seen in an idealised form. In their size these fairies are diminutive. Mischief is a predominant quality of all the fairies. *A Midsummer Nights' Dream* and *The Merry Wives of Windsor* are two remarkable plays in this respect. In these plays Shakespeare gives us a good peep into his wonderful fairy kingdom.

2. **The Spirit of the World.** In *The Tempest* Shakespeare's exquisite fantasy introduces us once again to the fairy world. Here Ariel is an ethereal spirit exercising immense powers over nature. It is invisible, can travel at a very high speed, has power to raise storms in the sea and the like.

3. Witches. Shakespeare has brought supernatural witches in his play *Macbeth, which we are going to study in the following pages. These witches have many characteristics. One of such characteristics is that they have beards. The other is that they may assume all types of shapes like that of a rat, but whatever form they take the tail is missing. One of the witches says, "And like a rat without a tail, I'll do, I'll do, and I'll do." This quotation proves the point raised above. They have a magic power. With this power they may produce all that is evil. Again like the fairies they do also possess the power of vanishing at will. In Macbeth they do suddenly vanish and leave the two generals absorbed in amazement. Besides these. they have many more characteristics which we will study at a more appropriate occasion.*

4. Ghosts. Shakespeare has made use of ghosts in *Macbeth*, *Richard III*, *Hamlet*, and *Julius Caesar*. In *Macbeth* Banquo's ghost appears in a most shocking manner while the banquet is going on. In *Richard III* ghosts come in sleep. In *Hamlet* the king's ghost comes invisible clad in full armour. In *Julius Caesar* the ghost of Caesar comes to drowsy Brutus. Deeper study of these ghosts reveals that there are two kinds of ghosts in Shakespeare's plays: (*a*) Subjective Ghosts and (*b*) Objective Ghosts. Now, we will discuss these two kinds in more detail.

(*a*) **Subjective Ghosts.** According to Gervinus the phenomenon that Macbeth and Hamlet see ghosts physically provides "strongest proof of the power of the imaginative faculty." He further remarks: "We hardly tell our readers... ..that Shakespeare's spirit-world signifies nothing but the physical embodiment of the images conjured up by a lively fancy, and that their apparition only takes place with those who have this excitable imagination. The cool Gertrude sees not Hamlet's ghost, the cold, sensible Lady Macbeth sees not that of Banquo." All this means that ghosts are subjective—they are mere conceptions of the excited mind of those who see them in their imagination. This theory is called 'the theory of subjectivity.' It applies only in those cases where a single person, whose state of mind is subject

to hallucination, sees a silent apparition invisible to others. *Macbeth sees Banquo's ghost which is quite invisible to the others present at the banquet.*

(*b*) **Objective Ghosts.** The 'Objective theory' conceives ghosts "as external to and independent of the imagination of those who perceived them, as having a real existence outside the sphere of hallucination." Instances of this kind of abnormal state may be seen in *Julius Caesar* and *Hamlet.* In the first play Caesar's ghost addresses Brutus. In the second Marcellus and Bernardo see the ghost talking with Hamlet. Now neither Marcellus nor Bernardo possesses an excitable imagination and yet each of them sees the ghost. Here, in this case, the subjective theory fails and the objective applies which maintains that ghosts may be perceived as having real existence independent of the imagination of the person seeing them.

Conclusion. Much emphasis is often laid in criticisms of Shakespeare's use of the supernatural upon the fact that in *Julius Caesar* and *Macbeth* the apparition is seen only by one person, and a person whose mental condition at the time predisposes him to hallucinations. Many, like Hudson, who adopt the views of 'Subjectivity' or 'Objectivity,' do so from a vague desire to clear Shakespeare of the suspicion that he himself believed in ghosts. None of these theories may satisfactorily explain the real cause of the appearance of apparitions in Shakespeare. We must fully bear in mind that Shakespeare uses the supernatural as one of the legitimate devices of dramatic art. It is to enhance the dramatic effect that he introduces supernatural elements in his plays.

SHAKESPEARE'S DRAMATIC CRAFTSMANSHIP

The Structure of a Shakespearean play

We have seen earlier in the 'General Introduction' that Aristotle suggested a model for a play. He marked out five divisions or stages with special regard to various

points in the development of the plot of the play and the rise and fall of the conflict which is the subject matter of all drama. These five stages are : (1) Exposition or opening of the conflict, (2) The rising of action —complication, (3) Climax—the intense point of the conflict, (4) Falling action—downward creeping of conflict, (5) Conclusion or Catastrophe—end. We will now examine how a Shakespearean play passes through these stages.

1. Exposition. The study of Shakespeare's plays show that he shows a great skill in introducing his themes. The exposition is quick and interesting. The first few persons appearing on the stage tell us, through their brief and clean dialogue, all that we need to know about the situation. We are thus at once acquainted with the situation in which the main or principal characters stand involved at the opening of the drama. This information is conveyed to us indirectly because the characters exposing the situation do not address us but apparently talk to one another. Their conversation is purely natural and quite appropriate. Thus, the 'exposition,' which is made through the medium of easy and natural dialogue, performs the function of an introduction to the conflict and contains substantial information about the theme and subject matter of the play.

2. The Rising Action. Just after the first stage of the exposition of the situation the second and more complicated stage comes. The skill of a dramatist lies in his ability to evolve out the events into the rising action out of the exposition itself in such a manner that they may appear to have naturally grown out of it. This is the stage when a strong desire or purpose is awakened in the mind of the hero. Shakespeare bases this desire on the peculiar character of the hero and the special circumstances in which he is placed. The Shakespearean hero makes a strenuous effort to accomplish his desire and the struggle, with its outcome, makes the subject-matter of the play. One of the characteristics of the Shakespearean play is that there is necessarily some measure of conflict even in a light and sportive type of comedy. In serious

tragedies an intense atmosphere is developed. There is acute conflict and struggle between the principal character and his powerful opponents. The incident which forms the beginning of the play is often called thc 'initial incident' or the 'initial step.' The phrase denotes the particular occurrence with which the movement of the drama actually begins. It is this incident which depicts to us the nature of the conflict that engages our attention. In Shakespeare's plays we find a natural connection and deep relation between the stages of 'exposition' and the 'rising action.' The action and character in a Shakespearean play are well knitted together. He fully stresses and emphasizes all those elements of conflict at this second stage which are going to play an important part in the third stage.

3. **Crisis**. The conflict exposed in the first and developed in the second stage has to be brought to a head in the third. This stage is called the climax or the crisis of conflict. The word climax is employed in dramatic criticism to denote the point of greatest emotional intensity in a play. It is the point where the feelings of the spectators are most powerfully excited. Shakespeare's climaxes are a natural and logical outcome of the rising action and have the capacity of being interpreted in the light of the first scene. In his plays, the nature of the character and the circumstances exposed in the first scene do always justify the event occurring at the crisis of the conflict. Now the question arises as to where a climax or crisis should be placed. In the plays of Shakespeare we find the climax occurring in the middle of the action. He usually puts it in the third Act. It should, however, be borne in mind that we can strike no hard and fast rules in this connection. In *Othello*, for example, our interest constantly increases even up to the tremendous catastrophe occurring at the close of the play. It has become a tendency with the modern dramatist to continue postponing the crisis as long as possible. They intensify the suspense by such postponement. The crisis in Galsworthy's *Justice*, for example, has been delayed up in the very close of the play to maintain the suspense.

4. The Falling Action. Soon after the conflict has climbed up into the crisis, it begins to fall down by slow degrees. In tragedies, the misery and misfortune of the hero or the principal character enhance further, but in comedies such troubles and complexities vanish. The greatest problem before a dramatist at the stage of ' falling action ' is to keep up the interest of the audience artistically. Shakespeare has a gift of maintaining such interest even after the climax. He keeps the interest of his spectators alive during the process of the 'fall.' For this purpose he employs the device of taking the 'rising action' and the ' climax ' nearer to the falling action and reducing the latter as far as possible so that the fall may not be felt by the audience at all.

5. The Conclusion. The dramatic conflict passing through various stages explained above is brought to a close in the conclusion wherein all the lines of dramatic story are gathered together and the play is given final touches. Shakespeare's conclusions are not abrupt. They give a sense of completeness and finality. In tragedies, the principal characters are generally killed. The tragic plays end in disaster and ruin. The conclusions in Shakespearean comedies are happier. The dark clouds are cleared away and the principal characters are relieved. Mingled dramas of Shakespeare may be termed as tragi-comedies.

It should not be supposed, for a moment, that these divisions of action are as distinct as they appear by the above discussion ; they overlap one another. One quality of Shakespeare is that he skilfully prepares his audience for every future development. Even then, we are surprised at the turn which the action takes. An attentive spectator, however, finds every further development more according to his expectations. The reason is that Shakespeare leads us to anticipate each succeeding stages of action before it begins. He makes us see that it is a necessary consequence of what has preceded. In tragedies, particularly, the characters and circumstances are so exposed in the early stages that they, to some extent, indicate

in a general way what the outcome is going to be. It is then, says Tolman, that the "Mighty masterpiece moves steadily on to its inevitable end."

SHAKESPEARE AS A DRAMATIC ARTIST

Contemplating upon Shakespeare "through the shades of ages as the eye surveys the sun through artificial opacity," Dr. Samuel Johnson tells the world what a magnificent "faithful mirror of manners and of life" is held in the hands of this great dramatist who "is above all writers, at least above all modern writers, the poet of Nature." Shakespeare's 'mirror of life' presents true images of human affairs and when it is turned towards the super-human world it reflects even that world in a most natural manner. That Shakespeare's compositions resemble a forest or a mine, that his characters are real human beings and the like, are the analogies merely meant to emphasise the same facts again and again. With these fundamental facts in view we proceed to examine the various aspects of Shakespeare's art as a dramatist.

1. **Intuitive Sympathy.** Shakespeare possessed high intuitive sympathy for man and had a faculty of marvellous intuitive excess into the mysteries of the human mind. In that sphere no poet, ancient or modern, can hold out a challenge to Shakespeare. This intuition is based upon his boundless sympathy and capacity for identifying himself with all types of human character. He had a rare gift of mingling with crowds with a keen observant eye. The modes of speech and ways of thought of all the classes of men impressed themselves upon the sensitive tablet of his mind and when the moment for dramatic creation came, these impressions readily came to his pen. The imagination of Shakespeare stamped them with reality. He had the power of transforming into vivid realities all sorts of situations whether they may be complex or subtle. Even ghosts in his plays are endowed with a personality as convincing as that of a real man. The witches in his play *Macbeth* are an example. His power of identifying himself with all types of characters may be proved by citing countless examples, from his

various plays. He has painted the character of Shylock. Shylock is a Jew. The Jews in Shakespeare's time were oppressed by Christians and the inhumanity of man had made Shylock inhuman. If other dramatists of Shakespeare's age were entrusted with painting the portrait of Shylock, they must have done so in conformity with the contemporary prejudices. When this character fell into the hands of Shakespeare, it took a different shape. Rising above his age he saw Shylock from a different angle altogether. He presented him as a representative symbol of a down-trodden people, an inheritor of great traditions and as an avenger of intolerable wrongs. It was due to his all comprehensive sympathy for all mankind that enabled him to see right into the innermost corners of the human heart and mind.

2. **Imaginative Faculty**. Shakespeare's gift of poetic imagination comes immediately next to his intuitive sympathy for man. The most essential creative element in all works of art is imagination. It is the power which unites and moulds conceptions into forms and shapes. Shakespeare possessed this power to a highest degree. He could conceive and transform his observations into distinctive forms. It was his power of imagination through which he could make dreams of fancy look like realities of actual life. One of the greatest qualities of Shakespeare lies in the fact that he could shape his conceptions with perfect consciousness. He did not make use of the contemporary devices. While moulding his conceptions into verbal forms he did not stand in need of using the traditional conventions followed by the dramatists of his age. When a tragic situation it presented by other dramatists, they are generally inclined to excite the mind of the audience either through declamations or through horrible scenes of bloodshed. Shakespeare did never exceed the limits of adequacy. In his play *Macbeth* does not present the scene of Duncan's murder through cheap contemporary theatrical devices. *Macbeth* expresses his mental condition not through self-reproaches or by earth-shaking magniloquence. He expresses his repentance in a most ordinary way which gives us a sense

of reality and naturalness. Such examples may be quoted from other plays as well but all of them will go to conclusively prove that Shakespeare made artistic and skilful use of his inherent gift of poetic imagination and not the usual modes, artifices and theatrical devices generally adopted by his contemporaries.

3. Characterization. The first point which needs emphasis in connection with our discussion of charcterisation is that Shakespeare's characters are real persons like common human beings. There is nothing artificial about them. Apart from other qualities, the most important peculiarity is that these characters are true representatives of humanity as a whole. They are not bound up by local customs, or fettered in the chains of particular occupations or again shackled in narrowness of outlook. They are not slaves of transitory fashions or temporary opinions. They are, as a matter of fact, true offsprings of humanity moving not by any peculiar passions and principles but by the universal emotions and fundamental rules of thought and action which regulate the whole universe. Almost every action and every word of his characters is the outcome of that influence of inspiration and zeal which excites all minds of persons and the whole order of life on the globe. The ordinary dramatists draw characters which do not unfold the human nature in all its true glory. Such characters cannot be said to symbolize the universal nature. They represent only themselves. Consequently, in respect of their narrow designs, views, and beliefs, such characters can be said to be mere individuals dominated by local influences. But Shakespearean characters belong to the human race and are universal in all the possible senses of the term, and, therefore, their speeches and actions, horrors and fears, feelings and emotions, all are governed by those principles which operate through the whole process of life. On these grounds, it may rightly be claimed that Shakespeare's characters belong to all times and represent the basic nature of all nations on earth. The foremost aspects which impress us while we study Shakespearean

characters closely, are their variety and naturalness. In Shakespeare's dramatic art, there is no self-reproduction. He keeps himself astonishingly impersonal and impartial. Critics try to seek in vain Shakespeare behind this or that character. The fact is that this great dramatist stand far away from the creation of his imagination. He displays consummate skill in delineation of multifarious characters. The characters do no doubt stream out from his imagination, yet there is not a single character which may not appear to us as acting in the real world. The most striking aspect is that there is no likeness, whatsoever, among them. His creative power and inspiration are manifested in his women characters most splendidly. He was all the time conscious that the female delicacy, grandeur and passion would be personated on the stage by male actors, for in his age the female rolls were performed by boys. It was due to his command over the technicalities of the stage as well as due to high quality of creative genius that he presented his female characters like Lady Macbeth, Desdemona, Juliet, etc., in such a way that they might not lose their charm and sweetness when presented on the stage which suffered from all sorts of limitations. Shakespeare stands highest among those who have exhibited human nature by means of dialogue. There is a great variety among his characters just as there is variety in the actual society of human beings. He gives so vivid an impression of his characters that we feel as if they are our associates. Not even one of his characters will be found to deviate widely from the common standard. We feel that if we meet any of his characters in real life, we will not be able to call him an eccentric. In Shakespeare's plays, man appears as he really is. He is made up of numerous currents of passions. These passions throw a veil of mystery over man and govern him. Shakespeare represents the human mind struggling under hundreds of powers balancing one another. Great tribute of admiration is due to Shakespeare for his contribution of a large number of striking portraits than all the dramatists put together could produce. In the words of George Meredith, "Shakespeare is a well-spring of characters which are saturated with the comic spirit ; with more of

what we will call blood-life than is found to be anywhere out of Shakespeare : and they are not of this world, but they are of the world enlarged to our embrace by imagination, and by great poetic imagination." He further remarks that these characters are "creatures of the woods, and wilds, not walled towns, not grouped and toned to pursue a comic exhibition of the narrower world of society."

4. Humour. Morton Luce remarks that Shakespeare is supreme "for his wit while it ranges from word-play to wisdom." His wit, in the opinion of Morton Luce, is not only astounding but is also healthy and joyous ; it may dazzle but may not blind ; it may sharpen, but does never wound. Shakespeare's humour, in this critic's opinion, teaches a lesson that "to laugh is of more profit than to weep, and that to sneer—even at folly—is the mark of a fool." However, to smile on the weaknesses of humanity till it begins to smile on itself may be a wise man's pastime. Shakespeare's humour is divine rather than mortal. It is a God-like intelligence which sees through the whole of human life. Its smile is a serene one.

5. Exhibition of Passion. Shakespeare is acknowledged to be supreme in his skill in the exhibition of passion. He is master of painting passion in an inimitable way. This passion may be jealousy, frenzy, ambition or love, it gradually grows in volume and force. According to Lessing, Shakespeare has the gift of using most minute and secret artifices by which he makes 'a feeling steal into our souls.' He represents in his plays with great fidelity every account of passion, may it be folly, idiocy, fantastic eccentricity or moral perturbation or again, jealousy, fury and frenzy. He traces out the finest shades of all these passions masterfully. Even the most experienced psychologist will have to affirm their truth and accuracy.

6. Supernatural. We find by our study of Shakespeare's plays that he sometimes steps beyond the bounds of nature and begins to handle the supernatural as he has

done in *Macbeth*. We feel that he achieves his purpose with great success. Lying open before us the gates of his magical world of spirits he exhibits before us his witches amidst their supernatural mysteries. These things do exist in imagination only. Shakespeare's skill lies in the fact that he transforms them into such realistic forms that they carry with them ample force of conviction. By studying the attitude of the 'midnight ghost' in *Hamlet*, we begin to hesitate to entertain the belief that a ghost can be capable of indulging itself in a lengthy dialogue like an ordinary human being. When we find the ghost losing itself in fine rhetorical outbursts we feel that such things do not look dramatic nor they do justice to the nature of the supernatural itself. It is remarked by some critics that by presenting ghosts and witches like ordinary human beings, the dramatist has dragged the supernatural down to the bounds of the commonest human being and has divested it of its true nature.

7. **Philosophy of Life.** The study of Shakespeare's plays reveals the fact that he does not care much for the philosophy of being. He is a realistic poet and his creatures belong to the everyday world. Sometimes, he seems to soar high in course of the flight of his imagination but he does never cross the bounds of life. The fact is that his philosophy is based upon his practical observations—observations which are immediately applicable to the common facts of life. He does not lose himself in philosophising. In the words of Dowden, Shakespeare "sees, perhaps, not only the vision of life but through it to deeper and larger things beyond." No doubt, there was a period when the clouds of gloom were hovering over the poet's life. During this period his mind was drifting towards pessimism but he cannot be supposed to have become an atheist. He did not indulge in the religious philosophy too. As a matter of fact he had little to say on such matters as religion. In spite of that, his subconscious was inspired by deep belief in the existence of a supreme power—the Divinity which has control over our destinies. His works reveal his profound reverence for religion. His philosophy was, briefly speaking, practical prudence.

8. Comic Element. One aspect which is prominent in Shakespeare's plays is that of the comic element. We come across comic scenes even in his tragedies. There they perform the purpose of relaxing the mind from the strain caused by scenes of serious and gloomy happenings, resulting from the intensity of strong passions. The fact is that even in the introduction of skilful comic, the greatness of his art is clearly evident. Shakespeare's dramatic skill is proved by the fact, that like a clever craftsman, he keeps his audience engaged and does not leave them waiting in the course of the enactments of the scenes. This point, though minor, is important. In course of shifts, the players go off the stage, and Shakespeare does never leave it empty. He introduces something which has at the same time a bearing on the scene. This gives great relief to the audience and throws much light on his artistic skill as well.

9. Dialogue. Dr. Samuel Johnson says that every nation has a basically established style of expression so consistent and suited to the fundamental logic of the language spoken by the common people that it can never be taken as discarded at any stage of development. Shakespeare picks up his comic dialogue from amidst this sort of real conversation. The first quality of Shakespeare's dialogue is that it is 'familar.' It is not packed with obsolete modish innovations too elegant and ornamental to be easily understood. It is on the other hand a commonly spoken language based upon that permanent basic style which every nation possesses. In Johnson's words, "There is a conversation above grossness and below refineness, where propriety resides, and where this poet seems to have gathered his dialogue." That is the reason, says Johnson, why Shakespeare's dialogue is so familar. The beauty of Shakespeare's dialogue lies in its purity and fineness. There is ease and delicacy, simplicity and lucidity in his dialogue. It casts a quick impression on the minds. There are, no doubt, portions in his dialogue which look 'difficult' or 'rugged,' but neither such foggy and obscure portions, nor the rough, coarse and clumsy parts of his dialogue can be attributed to him as his

natural and general style. These are interpolations by the players in various theatres. Even if it is not so, Shakespeare's works looked at as a whole appear just like a highl productive and richly fertile country which contain also a few pieces of barren land unsuitable for cultivation. As these uncultivable areas do not make the whole country, so the difficult and rough pieces of Shakespeare's dialogue cannot make the whole of his style coarse, rough and laborious. There are occasions when his characters do not appear to be speaking in a realistic, natural and spontaneous dialogue. They seem to be speaking a 'forced language.' But this occasional lack of reality does not affect his talents as a poet of nature.

10. Style. One of the chief features of Shakespeare's style is that he uses metaphors very frequently. The fact is that while working out high passions, his own heart is so brimming with surging ideas that he is obliged to make use of the boldest kind of metaphors. Sometimes, these metaphors follow in such quick succession that they appear to run across one another. It is in order to express the rapid course of rushing thoughts that Shakespeare uses a significant style and the reader is often unable to keep pace with the dramatist's intellectual flight. In such cases he finds himself standing in confusion. It is not merely a dramatic technique with Shakespeare to express himself in such a style. As a matter of fact, the employment of different mediums of speech like verse and prose is necessary to create a marked distinction between characters. The dramatist does so consciously. It has been rightly remarked that there is nothing in Shakespeare's plays that does not repay closer and more observation and here with regard to his peculiar style of expression, we find certain purposes fulfilled artistically. A close examination of the language used by Shakespeare in prose and verse dialogue reveals the fact that he uses terms, phrases, metaphors and other linguistic styles which are intimately related to the tone and temperament of the dramatic figures appearing in his plays. He utilizes different forms of prose and verse for the purpose of expressing particular kinds of feelings through which his dramatic characters are passing.

11. Prose. In order that a drama should be realistic and less unnatural, the medium of expression used by the dramatist should resemble the normal style of speech in actual life. The critics, who object to verse in conversation or dialogue, base their objection on the ground that the language of the drama should be in keeping with the ordinary conversation of the people. However, some critics raise the question as to what language may be called the ordinary language of actual life. Naturally, such a language, they maintain, is undergoing constant change and it is difficult to define the forms of language in actual life. The style of expression which was prevalent yesterday has grown old today and we sometime, stand and stare at the peculiar expressions of our elders and of ultra-modern tricks of language used by youngsters. They point out that a living language is in a state of constant flux and every piece of art has a duty to symbolise such flexibilities. The language of the 18th-century Englishman was quite different from the language of the 20th century, The answer to such objections is that Shakespeare uses basically established idioms which are fundamentally consistent and suited to the original logic of the language. It cannot be taken as discarded at any time or stage of linguistic development. Shakespeare's language is, therefore, basically permanent and will continue to be enjoyed ever so long as the English language exists. Again, the objection that 'the language of the drama should be exactly like the language spoken in actual life,' may be dismissed on the ground that the drama itself cannot be claimed to be a piece of real life. It is obviously a highly artificial form and reflection of actuality. Drama produces in selected and concentrated forms a shadow of a single slice of life. The dramatist cuts the slice and presents it to us with a definite purpose. This purpose has to be expressed by means of significant mediums of conversation. The dramatist often uses poetic language. It may be justified on the basis of dramatic conventions, as well as on the ground that drama is not the presentation of actual life but is only a representation of it in an artistic manner. The question of ordinary language is, therefore, out of place.

In the mouths of dramatic characters artisctic language may also suit well. Thus the practice of the old dramatists to employ versified forms of speech for the expression of the sentiments of various characters cannot be condemned as entirely worthless. Shakespeare makes all noble and heroic characters talk in versifield language. All the subsidiary characters use prose. The principal characters of Shakespeare's plays are socially and morally superior. He places them in abnormal and exciting situations. In such situations, their use of rythmic language and blank verse is quite justified because all the higher and stirring emotions may suitably be expressed in verse. The passion of love, for example, requires a poetic medium of expression. In those ordinary situations where the use of verse is unnecessary, Shakespeare employs prose. Again, the terrible moments of tragedies have been painted in prose because they could not be shackled within the bounds of rhythmic verse. As a matter of fact, such moments are so tense and rigidly exciting that they even break the mould of language. On such occasions Shakespeare uses disjointed language with an unrestrained flow of words. Such an expression does not conform to verse in the strict sense of the term. The study of the style of Shakespeare with reference to the use of prose and verse in his plays leads to the conclusion that he uses prose in order to relieve the audience from the monotony of verse. One more point which is revealed is that as blank verse is more suited to the expression of exalted emotions and thoughts, Shakespeare uses the medium of blank verse in his tragedies more frequently than in his comedies in which he employs prose. The skill and artistic craftsmanship of Shakespeare consists in the fact that he alters the mode of expression to exactly suit a particular situation. He provides proper relief and change by running from prose to verse and vice versa. All these things are evident in his plays like *The Merry Wives of Windsor* and *Hamlet*, etc. The former is a comedy while the latter is a tragedy and both are typical to furnish proper illustrations.

12. Verse. In a dramatic composition, peculiar

situations are selected where feelings and passions run at their highest pitch. Even in actual life, sometimes, men are so keyed-up that they begin to express themselves in rhythmic language if not exactly in actual verse. Such a language is far removed from prose spoken in ordinary circumstances. As intense and highly emotional situations are dealt with by the dramatist, he is. therefore, justified in using verse. Again, the artistic necessity which requires great economy of words compels a dramatist to use most significant forms of expression and such a form may be verse in most cases. The space and time at the disposal of a dramatist are limited. He has to make his characters express deep-felt ideas and emotions in brief and effective terms arranged in such a manner that each word spoken by him may communicate to the audience with maximum emotional effect that idea as desired by the dramatist. The only effective medium of expression in which the language has been intelligently ordered and arranged may be verse. It should be clearly borne in mind that the dramatic verse is not pure poetry. It is distinct from prosaic prose and is in fact a rhythmic form of expression. Shakespeare picks up conventional speech, transforms it into polished language in order to suit his requirements and sometimes creates and coins original patterns of words and phrases to express the exact sense. In other words, he builds up a language which may have the capacity of expressing subtlest aspects of feelings and emotions. To depict a particular mood he adopts a particular mode, and excels all poets, ancient or modern, in his power of expressing the minutest shapes and forms of feelings and moods. We find some lyrical pieces in some of his plays. These brilliant pieces show how unique was the gift Shakespeare possessed, for he seems to be an inexhaustible fountain of sweet lyric utterances. These lyrics have music in them. They are simple but sublime. He creates his own rhythm by using few words simply but at the same time transcending all rhetoric and poetry. Their function is to illuminate the darkness of some tragic situation. Some poets have produced as great poetry as Shakespeare did but in one aspect Shakespeare stands head and shoulders high above them and it is the sublimity of phrases about which it has been

said "in the circle of that great magic none dare walk but he." It is now proved that the dramatic language is an artificial and conventional language. It is removed from the common laguage of actual life. Now such a language may be rhymed verse, blank verse or prose. The blank verse has proved itself to be the best medium for dramatic composition. It is a compromise between rhymed verse and prose and has not only been used by Shakespeare but by many English dramatists ever since Marlowe's time. When Shakespeare used it, it looked rich and strange. It is in his hand undoubtedly a most fluid and flexible medium of expression. It can be used suitably at any situation whether it is tragic, comic or ordinary. It should not be inferred from this that the blank verse is the only fitting medium of expression for dramatic purposes. If it is continually and invariably used, there will be no relief. It is, therefore, that Shakespeare uses both media of language, namely prose and verse, and thereby maintains a balance in his plays. He deliberately and consciously conceived this scheme. It was not based on any abstract principle of literary criticism, but was on the other hand drafted according to the artistic requirements of his plays. He had to keep situations and characters in his view. Wherever a mental change occurs in a character, he is brisk enough to skilfully bring about a change in the form of his language. Numerous examples may be cited to prove this fact. In *Macbeth*, for instance, we find the same device. This is the shortest tragedy of Shakespeare and there is no occasion where relief may be required. As Shakespeare has introduced a supernatural atmosphere in this play, he has made use of verse rather than prose. Again, verse was needed as the basic medium of expression in this play because it is full of tragic situations in which the complex feelings have to be expressed. It will be noted that even here we find a marked change in the medium of expression. Shakespeare at various occasions turns from verse to prose. This is done for two purposes. In the first place such device is used because he has to draw a distinction between the main characters and the subsidiary ones.

The Porter, for example, does not speak the same language as the witches or *Macbeth* does. The same device has been used in *Hamlet* and *King Lear*. Prose is generally used by Shakespeare to express the abnormal conditions of mind. In Act V of *Macbeth*, where Lady Macbeth has been shown as walking in sleep, she speaks in ordinary prose. It is so because she is in an abnormal state of mind. To show this state desirably, Shakespeare changes from verse to prose. The whole of *Macbeth* is in verse except where Shakespeare aims to achieve these two purposes, *i.e.*, to mark a distinction between main and subsidiary characters, and to show the abnormal state of mind. Verse has a peculiar power of suggestion of intense passions and elevated thoughts. Tragedies are full of sordid and sombre elements and in order to tone down these elements, the use of verse becomes necessary. Shakespeare has been acknowledged by critics as a honey-tongued poet possessing enchanting sweetness. His verse is musical. It raises the level of a sordid situation into the realm of poetry. Even these sordid melodramatic situations enchant us when they are lifted to the artistic elevations. Shakespeare knew how to exploit the advantages of verse. In Professor Nicoll's opinion, verse claims attention of every tragic dramat st because it raises the events of a drama above the level of actual life and because it is the natural medium of expression of intense emotions. We can touch the finest chords through melody and rhythm. The verse gives universality to a piece of highest art. It has been used in order to allay the suspicions and feelings of disgust which are caused by a horrible and intricate atmosphere built in a tragedy. Shakespeare, therefore, bursts into lyrical utterances among scenes of terrible tragedies.

13. Plots. The first thing to note in connection with plots is that Shakespeare did not invent or create his plots but discovered them. The ancient chronicles, legends and dramas served him as sources or originals in this respect. But whatever plots he borrowed from this chronicle or that legend were not adopted by him as they were. He tinged those plots with his own undying

glory. The original sources from which he borrowed his plots are extremely crude as compared with his finished artistic structures. In his comedies we find currents of mirth and hilarity while in his tragedies we mark storms and stress. His plays are full of beautiful pieces of poetry and sublime thought. All these qualities were lacking in the original sources and the credit ultimately goes to this great dramatist. Dr. Furness says, "When after reading one of his tragedies we turn to what we were pleased to call 'the original of the plot'......we see only wretched little worms which crawl painfully away and which the foot forbears to crush out of strange pity." Shakespeare himself did not look at his original sources with more respect than they deserved. He borrowed English as well as Continental plots and selected only such promising material which could be adopted to desirably serve the dramatic purposes. Once he had picked up such material, he would treat it with the utmost freedom. He changed the plots freely according to his sweet will, made additions in the borrowed material if he thought fit and left out parts which in his judgment were unnecessary or unsuitable. Thus, the old plots were sometimes entirely changed. Again, he gave an absolutely new interpretation of the old characters. He added new characters and new events in the plots of the old plays and novels. For instance, he found in an old historian, Holinshed, two very interesting stories form Scottish history. One was about a king called Macbeth and another about a king called Duff who lived at a different period. He picked out the best incidents from the two stories and combined them into a single drama called Macbeth, the masterpiece which we are going to study in the following pages.

AN ASSESSMENT OF THE GREATNESS OF SHAKESPEARE

Giving an assessment of Shakespeare's greatness in the light of various characteristics and aspects of his art, Walter Raleigh says that every age has its own difficulties in the appreciation of Shakespeare, who is recognized for what he is : perhaps the greatest poet of all time ; one

who has said more about humanity than any other writer, and has said it better; whose works are the study and admiration of divines and philosophers, of soldiers and statesmen, so that his continued vogue upon the stage is the smallest part of his immortality; who has touched many spirits finely to fine issues, and has been for three centuries a source of delight and understanding, of wisdom and consolation.

1. **Realistic Themes.** Proceeding further, Raleigh says: The indispensable preliminary for judging and enjoying Shakespeare is not knowledge of his history, not even knowledge of his works, but knowledge of his theme, a wide acquaintance with human life und human passions as they are reflected in a sensitive and independent mind. He remarks: The rapid, alert reading of one of the great plays brings us nearer to the heart of Shakespeare than all the faithful and laudable business of the antiquary and the commentator. In his opinion: Plays like those of Shakespeare cannot be written in cold blood; they call forth the man's whole energies, and take toll of the last farthing of his wealth of sympathy and experience. Shakespeare has made us acquainted with all that he sees and all that he feels; he has spread out before us the scroll that contains his interpretation of the world. Raleigh thinks that the power of Shakespeare's utterances springs from this that all statements carry with them the immediate warrant of experience. Dramatic genius, says Raleigh, which is sometimes treated as though it could dispense with experience, is in truth a capacity for experience, and for widening and applying experience by intelligence and sympathy. The critic remarks: Try as we may, we can never find Shakespeare talking in vague and general terms of that which lay beyond his vision. He testifies of what he knows. Raleigh goes on that Shakespeare speaks with unmistakably deep feeling of the faithlessness of friends, of inequality in the marriage-bond, of lightness in woman, and of lust in man. Phantom events have been fitted to all these utterances; and indeed many of them do irresistibly suggest a background of bitter personal reminiscence.

2. The Man. As we grow faimilar with Shakespeare's work, we are overwhelmed by the sense that we are in the presence of a living man, says Raleigh. When we read his comedies, we catch the infection of mirth that we know to be his. As we draw near to the awful close of *King Lear* or *Othello*, and feel the fibres of our being almost torn assunder, the comfort that comes to us when quiet falls on the desolate scene is the comfort of the sure knowledge that Shakespeare is with us ; that he who saw these things felt them as we do, and found in the splendour of courage and love a remedy for despair. When he stated both sides of a question, and seems to leave the balance wavering, he is still expressing his own mind ; even by refusing the choice. But everywhere, even where we follow with uncertain steps, we feel the pressure of his hand, and are aware that all the knowledge that we gather by the way is knowledge of him, authorised and communicated by himself.

3. Pleasure. It need not be said that Shakespeare was a wholehearted lover of pleasure, in himself and in others. His enormous zest in life makes his earlier comedies a paradise of delight.

4. Villains. Shakespeare's villains and evil characters are all self-absorbed and miserable and retospective. They belong to the terrible army of cripples, who employ the best skill of their four senses to avenge upon others the loss of a fifth.

5. Central Drama. But the central drama of his mind is the tragedy of the life of imagination. He was a lover of clear decisive action, and of the deed done. He knew and condemned the sentiment which fondly nurses itself and is without issue. Yet, on the other hand, the gift of imagination with which he was so richly dowered, the wide, restless, curious searchings of the intelligence and the sympathies—these faculties, strong in him by nature, and strengthened every day by the exercise of his profession, bade fair at times to take sole possession, and

to paralyse the will. Then he revolted against himself and was almost inclined to bless that dark, misfeatured messenger called the angel of this life, "whose care is lest men see too much at once."

6. **Ease and Fluency**. The frank geniality of the man and the excitable fervour of the talker are matched by the unchecked exuberance of the poet. Economy is no part of his habitual method. One quality which has been attributed to Shakespeare in his character of Nature, and has been used to fortify the parallel is certainly his by right. A very old and persistent tradition makes him the master of incomparable ease and fluency. "His mind and hand went together," say his friends and editors, (Heminge & Condell), "and what he thought, he uttered with that easiness, that we have scarce received from him a blot in his papers."

7. **Language**. To understand Shakespeare, it is necessary to study the subtlest of his instruments—the language that he wielded. His amazing wealth of vocabulary and idiom, his coinages and violent distortions of meaning, his freedoms of syntax and analogy, comparable only to the freedoms that are habitual in the "little language" of a family of children—all these things must be assessed, and compared with the normal standards of his time, before they can be known for a part of him. Much of Shakespeare's language is language hot from the mind, and only partially hardened into grammar.

8. **Sources**. It is safe to assert that Shakespeare was a poet before he was a dramatist. Of his first steps in the practice of poetry nothing is known ; but the study of his plays and poems has thrown some light on his dealings with literature. Books served him in two ways ; as a mine and as a school ; he lifted from them the tables that he rehandled, and he learned from them some part of his poetic and dramatic method. He was a child of the English Renaissance, and it was the books of his own age that first caught him in their toils. He read the works of his contemporaries as they appeared.

Marlowe is his master in the drama. The books that served him best for his dramatic plots were Raphael Holinshed's *Chronicles*, Sir Thomas North's translation of Plutarch's *Lives*, and the Italian novelists, in many translations, chief among which must be reckoned Painter's *Palace of Pleasure*, containing a selection of choicest novels of the great Italian masters. From Holinshed he took the substance of his English historical plays; and his study of the book acquainted him also with those ancient British legends which he transfigured in *King Lear*, *Macbeth*, and *Cymbeline*.

9. Handling of Sources. An examination of the use that he makes of these, his principal sources, shows that he did not pay the same measure of respect to them all. The novels he treats with the utmost freedom, altering them, or adding to them, to suit their fancy. He brings them out of the languid realm of romance by inventing new realistic characters, who give something ot the diversity of life to the story, and save it from swooning into sheer convention.

Sometimes Shakespeare follows his authority so tamely that he versifies whole speeches from the chronicler, working, as it would seem, with the book open before him. The discussion on the Salic Law in *Henry V.*, and *the long dialogue between Malcolm and Macduff, in the Fourt act of Macteth, are taken directly from Holinshed, and are very imperfectly dramatised. It is to passages like these that Dryden alludes when he speaks of Shakespeare falling "into a carelessness, and, as I may call it, a lethargy of thought, for whole scenes together."*

10. Imaginative Powers. But when a crisis calls for treatment, when his imagination takes fire, or his sense of humour is touched, he gives over borrowing, and coins from his own mint. Every word spoken by Falstaff is a word of life, for Falsaff was unknown to the chroniclers. *The character of Lady Macbeth is respresented in Holinshed by a single sentence: "But specially his wife lay sore upon him to attempt the thing, as she that was very*

ambitious, burning in unquenchable desire to bear the name of a Queen." From this bare hint Shakespeare created his murderess, her narrow practical intensity, her heroic courage and fierce will, holding imagination at bay, soothing and supporting her husband, making light of the deed to be done, until human nature avenges itself on her, and she too falls a victim to air-drawn fancies, and hears voices in her sleep. In this, as in other cases, Holinshed was used by Shakespeare as a kind of mechanical aid to start his imagination on its flight and launch it into its own domain.

There is evidence to show how strong a hold the stories and characters of Plutarch laid upon Shakespeare's imagination. When Banquo, on the sudden disappearance of the witches, exclaims.

> *Were such things here as we do speak about,*
> *Or have we eaten on the insane root,*
> *That takes the reason prisoner ?*

the Scottish thane is rememberings his Plutarch. Of modern French and Italian writers it is clear that those whom he knew best he knew in translation. His ultimate sympathies are with human frailty, human simplicity, human unreason ; and it is to these that he gives the last word.

11. Craft and Experience. The careful study of Shakespeare's sources, though it throws some light on his dramatic methods, does not bring us much nearer to the heart of the matter. Its results are mainly negative. He read Holinshed, and happened on the stories of *King Lear* and *Macbeth*. There is nothing in these stories, as he found them, to awaken more than a languid interest. The crafts and experience which were the making of the plays are not taken from the books.

(*a*) **Contrast.** His plays are extraordinarily rich in the floating debris of popular literature—scraps and tags and broken ends of a whole world of songs and ballads and romances and proverbs. In this respect he is notable

even among his contemporaries; few of them can match him in the wealth that he caught out of the air or picked up by the roadside.

(*b*) **Stock-in Trade.** There is thus no difficulty in crediting Shakespeare with ample opportunities for acquiring the stock-in-trade of a playwright. No biography, however well informed and minute, can lay bare the processes of a poet's initiation in his craft, which is in its nature far more obscure than the history of his life and opinions. We must be content with less knowledge of Shakespeare's beginnings.

(*c*) **Fanciful Descriptions.** The poet in Shakespeare sometimes forgets the dramatist, and interjects a fanciful description, elaborated for its own sake, and assigned, without ceremony, to be spoken by the nearest stander-by. Shakespeare's beginnings were not courtly, but popular. He was plunged into the wild Bohemian life of actors and dramatists at a time when nothing was fixed or settled, when every month brought forth some new thing, and popularity was the only road to success.

(*d*) **The Stage Effects.** Not only was Shakespeare's stage bare, but the story of the play was often unknown beforehand to his audience. The background and environment of his principal characters had to be created in the imagination of the spectators, worked upon and excited by his poetry. *Twelth Night*, a play compact of harmony, opens with the strains of music; and, when the music ceases, the wonderful speech of the Duke, on love and imagination, is a summary of all that follows. In *Romeo and Juliet*, before either of the lovers is heard of, we witness a quarrel between the servants of the rival houses. The first words spoken in *Hamlet* are a challenge to the sentry who guards the royal castle of Elsinore; *Macbeth begins with a thunderstorm and rumours of battle, and the ominous tryst of the witches.* Not less wonderful than these is the opening of *Othello*; the subdued voices, talking earnestly in the street, of money, and preferment, and ancient grudges, are the muttering

of the storm which breaks with tropical violence in the sudden night-alarm, and is lulled into quiet again in the Council Chamber of the Duke. But this cloud is only the vanguard of the darkness that is to follow, and of the winds that are to blow till they have awakened death. The development of Shakespeare's greater plays is curiously musical in its logic; the statement and interweaving of the themes, the variations and repetitions, the quiet melodies that are heard in the intervals, and the gradual increase of complexity until the subtle discourse of the earlier scene is swallowed up in the full blare of the reunited orchestra—all this ordered beauty was made possible by the strict subordination of stage effects to the needs and methods of poetry. No detail of the business of a playwright escaped his attention. Where the action is so complex as it commonly is in Shakespeare's plays, a great part of it must necessarily be set forth in report of narration.

(*e*) **Unities.** The day for discussing the notorious unities in connection with Shakespeare's drama is long past. Romantic poetry creates its own drama, and acknowledges no unity save that which is equally binding on a poem or a prose story—the unity of impression. Nowhere is the magic of Shakespeare's art greater than here. He reduces a wild diversity of means to a single purpose; and submits the wealth of his imagination and knowledge to be judged by this one test.

(*f*) **Dramatic Poetry.** His landscape, his moonlight and sunlight and darkness, his barren heaths and verdurous parks, are all agents in the service of dramatic poetry. Shakespeare's dramatic estate cannot be brought under the hammer, for it is rich in nothing but poetry.

12. Division. Even the time honoured distinction of Tragedy and Comedy gives no true or satisfying division of Shakespeare's plays. *Othello* is a tragedy; *As you Like It* is a comedy; so much may be admitted. But between the most marked examples of the two kinds there is every degree and variety of tragic and comic interest,

exhibited in rich confusion ; so that the plays might be best arranged on a graduated scale ; comedy shades into tragedy by imperceptible advances, and he would be a bold man who should presume to determine the boundary. All the materials and all the methods of Shakespeare's Tragedy are to be found dispersed in his Comedy. Most of his themes are indifferent, and no one could predict which of them he will choose for a happy ending. Nor is there reason to suppose that the public called at one time for comic stories, at another time for tragic, and that his plots are adapted to suit the demand. The real difference is in his own mood ; the atmosphere and impression which gives to each play its character are reflected from his own thought, and cannot be ranged under two heads to meet the mechanical requirements of criticism.

His early boisterous comedies and his prentice-work on history are followed by his joyous comedies and mature histories ; these again by his tragedies and painful comedies ; and last, at the close of his career, he reverts to comedy, but comedy so unlike the former kind, that modern criticism has been compelled to invent another name for these final plays, and has called them Romances.

13. No Single Attitude. Shakespeare's Comedy is akin to his Tragedy, and does not come to the other house. The kind of Comedy which has been most famous and most influential in the world's history is satirical comedy, which takes its stand on the best social stage, and laughs at the follies of idealists. His imagination is too active to permit him to find rest in a single attitude. His mind is always open to the wider issues, into fantasy or metaphysic. He can study the life of his fellows as a man might study life on shipboard, and can take delight in the daily intrigues of the human family, but there is a background to the picture ; he is often caught thinking of the sea, which pays no attention to good sense, and of the two-inch plank, which may start at any moment. Wit and good sense there is in plently ; and there is a woman, or a humorist, to show that wit and good sense are insufficient.

14. Carried Into Tragedy. The first breathings of tragic feeling, which are found even in the gayest of the early comedies, steadily increase in volume and intensity, until the storm rises, and blows all laughter out of the plays, except the laughter of the fool. It is as if Shakespeare were carried into tragedy against his will ; his comedies, built on the old framework of clever tricks and ludicrous misunderstanding, become serious on his hands ; until at last he recognises the position, cuts away all the mechanical devices whereby the semblance of happiness is vainly preserved, and goes with open eyes to meet a trial that has become inevitable.

15. Method. His first care was to get hold of a story that might he shaped to the needs of the theatre. It is possible, no doubt, for a dramatist, as it is for a novelist, to go another way to work. He may conceive living characters, and devise events to exhibit them ; or he may start with a moral, a philosophy of life, an atmosphere, a sentiment, and set his puppets to express it. But Shakespeare kept to the old road, and sought first for a story. Some of his characters were made by his story, as characters are made by the events of life. Others he permits to intrude upon the story, as old friends, or new visitors, intrude upon a plan and disorder it. His wisdom of life grew, a rich incrustation, upon the events and situation of his fable. But the story came first with him, as it came first with his audience, as it comes first with every child. Before appealing to the sympathies and judgment of his audience he has to acquaint them with the situation. Until the situation is created he cannot get to work on his characters. His plays open with a postulate ; then the characters begin to live, and as Act follows Act, come into ever closer and more vital relation to the course of events ; till at last the play is closed, sometimes triumphantly and inevitably, by exhibit ing the result of all that has gone before ; at other times-feebly and carelessly, by neglecting the new interests that have grown around the characters, and dragging the story back into its predestined shape. In the great tragedies story and character are marvellously adapted to each

other; hardly anything is forced or twisted to bring it within the limits of the scheme.

16. Master Craftsman. Shakespeare was a master craftsman, deeply acquainted with life, which had to be portrayed, and thoroughly exercised, by long practice, in the handling of all those dramatic schemes and patterns which had to be filled.

17. Defects. But in his early comedies, and also, strangely enough, in his latest plays, the adaptation of story and character is less perfect. When Shakespeare has no further use for a character, he sometimes disposes of him in the most unprincipled and reckless fashion. The plot must be carried on, the interest and movement of the story maintained at all costs, even if our sympathies are outraged by the wild justice that is done in the name of comedy. His profligates and coxcombs fill a plot as well as better, and when all is said, they are mortal men. Shakespeare's carelessness is a part of his magnanimity, and a testimony to his boundless resource.

18. Moves in Larger Scheme. If we sometimes find it hard to forgive him, it is partly because we are dissatisfied with the government of the world, and call out for "poetic justice," a narrow and rigid apportionment of reward and punishments according to the dictates of the moral sense. Shakespeare moves in a larger scheme of things, where the sun rises on the evil and on the good.

19. Othello—Perfect. There is not another of Shakespeare's plays which is so white-hot with imagination, so free from doubtful or extraneous matter, and so perfectly welded, as *Othello*. *Macbeth has some weak scenes*; *Hamlet* and *King Lear* are cast in a more variegated mould so that the tension is sometimes relaxed and the heat abated; *Antony and Cleopatra* approaches, in some of its scenes, to the earlier chronicle manner. In general, it is true to say that Shakespeare cheerfully burdens himself with a plot which is either very complex, or very artificial, or both, and then goes to work to make a living thing of it.

20. Situation. The best and highest part of Shakespeare's imagination was not concerned, one is tempted to say, with plot-architecture. Any plot is good enough for him, if it leads him by unlikely and tortuous ways, to a real situation; and no sooner is he confronted with a real situation than his characters, invented, it may be, only to fill a place in the story, become live and convincing. Shakespeare works on a story, concealing its barren ugliness under the life of his own creation. It is impossible to say when he will suddenly put forth his vital power, and take away the breath of his readers by some astonishing piece of insight which defeats all expectation. He is most natural when he upsets all rational forecasts. We are accustomed to anticipate how others will behave in the matters that most nearly concern us; we seem to know what we shall say to them, and to be able to forecast what they will say in answer. We are accustomed, too, to find that our anticipation is wrong; what really happens gives the lie to the little stilted drama that we imagined, and we recognise at once how poor and false our fancy was, how much truer and more surprising the thing that happens is than the thing that we invented. So it is in Shakespeare. His surprises have the same convincing quality; the word once said is known to have been inevitable, and the character ceases to be a character of fiction, controlled by the plot. We are watching the events of real life; from our hidden vantage-ground we see into the mystery of things, as if we were God's spies.

21. Insight into Character. Shakespeare dared to follow his characters into those dim recesses of personality where the hunted soul stands at bay, and proclaims itself, naked as it is, for a greater thing than law and opinion. Shakespeare's plays are works of art, not chronicles of facts. There is always a centre of interest. Some of the characters are kept in the full light of this area of perfect vision. Others, moving in the outer field of vision, have no value save in relation to this centre. His habit of over-crowding his canvas is sometimes detrimental to the main impression. *When Shakespeare intended a full-*

length portrait of a murderer, he wrote Macbeth, in which play Malcolm and Donalbain, the lawful heirs to the crown, fall into the background and are subordinated to the central interest. Even in the comedies, where the interest is less concentrated than in *Hamlet* or *Macbeth*, some of the chief figures are no more than accessory.

22. **Earlier Comedies**. In the comedies much is sacrificed to the story, and the implements of Shakespeare's comic stage—the deceits and mistakes and cross-purposes—are used to maintain suspense and prolong the interest. Criticism of human life occurs incidentally, but can hardly be said to dictate the plot, which specially in the earlier comedies, is sometimes as symmetrical and artificial as the plot of a comic opera. The audience, it is clear, were concerned chiefly with the event, and in his effort to hold their attention he often introduces a new complication when the main story has reached its natural close. He so bathes his story in the atmosphere of poetry and fantasy, his characters are so high-spirited and good-tempered and resourceful, the action passes in such a tempest of boisterous enjoyment, and is mitigated by so many touches of human feeling that the whole effect remains gracious and pleasant, and the master of the show is still the gentle Shakespeare. The characters of the pure comedies are so confident in their happiness that they can play with it, and mock it, and put it to trials that would break fragility. They are equal to circumstance, and the most surprising adventures do not disconcert nor depress them. In a sense they, too, like the tragic heroes and heroines, are the antagonists of Fate. But Fate, in the realm of comedy, appears in the miider and more capricious character of Fortune, whose wheel turns again, and vindicates the merry heart.

23. **Supernatural Beings**. The impulses and passions that shape man's life to happy ends seem to owe their power to something greater than man, and refuse his control. Shakespeare gives them an independent life, and often embodies them in the supernatural beings who are exhibited on his stage. His *witches* and ghosts and

fairies do not come uncalled; they are shadows and reflections of the human mind, creatures of the mirror, who by a startling and true psychology, are brought alive, released from the dominion of man's will, and established as his masters. *Macbeth, excited by the dark hints of ambition, falls in with the witches; and thereafter is carried with fearful speed into an abyss of crime.* Hamlet, saddened by the death of his father and tortured by the infidelity of his mother, receives the message of the ghost, which brings his suspicions and broodings to a point, and makes him thenceforward an instrument in the hands of destiny. In *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, the inexplicable whims and changes of inconstant love seem to be the work of the fairies, sporting, not malevolently, with human weakness. The desire of the eyes, which is the motive-power of Shakespere's earlier romantic plays, is exhibited in many beautiful and fanciful guises transforming itself into passion or caprice, and irresistibly leading its victims to unexpected goals. It creates its own values, and has no commerce with reason.

24. Later Comedies. When Shakespeare, in the fullness of his powers, came to close grips with reality, he put away all those mechanical expedients wherewith he had enlivened his early comedies. The perfect temper of the earlier comedies gives the warrant of reality to the later and darker plays; we are saved from the suspicion that the discords in the music are produced by some defect in the instrument, or that the night which descends on the poet is the night of blindness. His tragedies become more solemn when we remember that this awful vision of the world was shown to a man cast in the antique mould of humanity, equable, alert, and gay. When the gaiety spent itself, and Shakespeare's mind was centred on tragic problems, the schemes of his later and darker comedies were still drawn from the old inexhaustible source. The Italian novel, in its long and brilliant history from the thirteenth to the sixteenth century, foreshadowed the development and change which is seen in Shakespeare's comedies. It began with witty and fantastic anecdote, borrowed, in large part, from the scurrilities of French

minstrels. By the genius of Boccaccio it was brought into closer touch with life. He retained many of the world-old jests, gross and impossible, but he intermixed them with another type of story, wherein he moves to pity and wonder by narrating memorable histories of passion. His chief sixteenth century disciplies, to both of whom Shakespeare owed much, were Bandello and Cinthio. These men carried the novel still further in the direction of realism. They claim to add to the materials for a science of human nature, which science may find later application in practice.

25. Shakespeare's Morals. Shakespeare is sometimes too wide and strong, too catholic in his sympathies and too generous in his acceptance of facts, for the bulk of his readers. His suburbs are not their suburbs ; nor is his morality their morality. Hazlitt himself, in the best words ever spoken on Shakespeare's morals, has given an explanation. "Shakespeare," he says, "was in one sense the least moral of all writers; for morality (commonly so called) is made up of antipathies ; and his talent consisted in sympathy with human nature in all its shapes, degrees, depressions, and elevations." This is indeed the everlasting difficulty of Shakespeare's criticism, that the critics are so much more moral than Shakespeare himself, and so much less experienced. He makes his appeal to thought, and they respond to the appeal by a display of delicate taste.

26. Women Characters. Shakespeare's characters of women, as they are drawn even in his earliest plays, take us into a world unknown to his master Marlowe, with whom women are prizes or dreams. Pope remarked that "every single character in Shakespeare is as much an individual as those in life itself ; it is as impossible to find any two alike." "Had all the speeches," he continues, "beenprinted without the very names of the persons, I believe one might have applied them with certainty to every speaker." The remark is almost true as regards any single play; but it would be a difficult task indeed to appropriate to their speakers all the wit-sallies of Beatrice and Rosalind, or to

distinguish character in every line of their speeches. Yet all alike are women ; hardly anything that they speak in their own characters could have been spoken by men. It is possible to extract from the plays some kind of general statement which, if it be not universally true of women, is at least true of Shakespeare's women. They are almost all practical, impatient of more words, clear-sighted as to ends and means. They do not accept the premises to deny the conclusion, or decorate the inevitable with imaginative lendings.

27. Men and Women Compared. To multiply instances would be tedious. Shakespeare's men cannot, as a class, compare with his women for practical genius. They can think and imagine as only Shakespeare's men can, but their imagination often masters and disables them. Self-deception, it would seem, is a male weakness.

The whole controversy is summarised in the difference between Macbeth and his wife. She knew him well, and has no patience with his scruples and dallyings :

What thou wouldst highly,
That wouldst thou holily : wouldst not play false,
And yet wouldst wrongly win.

For her, all the details and consequences of the crime are accepted with the crime itself. Her mind refuses to go behind the first crucial decision, or to waste precious time by speculating on the strangeness of things. But he, though he bends up each corporal agent to the terrible feat, cannot thus control the activities of his mind, or subdue them to a single practical end. His imagination will not be denied its ghastly play; he sees the murder as a single incident in the moving history of human woe, or forgets the need of the moment in the intellectual interest of his own sensation. When he acts, he acts in a frenzy which procures him oblivion, Because they do not ask questions of life, and do not doubt or deliberate concerning the fundamental grounds for action, Shakespeare's women are, in the main, either good or bad. The middle region of character, where mixed

motives predominate, belongs chiefly to the men. The women act not on thought, but on instinct, which, once it is accepted, admits of no argument. The subtlety and breadth of Shakespeare's knowledge of feminine instinct cannot be overpraised. He has no general theory ; his women are often witty and daring, but they are never made all of wit and courage. *Even Lady Macbeth's courage fails her when the affections of her childhood strike across her memory ;*

> *Had he not resembled*
> *My father as he slept, I had done't.*

Though she is magnificently rational and self-controlled at the crisis of the action, the recoil of the senses, which she had mastered in her waking moments, comes over her again in sleep: "Here's the smell of the blood still ; all the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand." So unerring is Shakespeare's intuition that he can supplement even Plutarch's narrative with wonderful additions of his own devising. The comparative simplicity of character which distinguishes Shakespeare's women from his men is maintained throughout the plays.

22 Historical Plays. The historical plays occupy a middle place in the Folio, and, in the process of Shakespeare's development, are a link between comedy and tragedy. Plays founded on English history were already popular when Shakespeare began to write; and while he was still an apprentice, their tragic possibilities had been splendidly demonstrated in *Marlowe's Edward II.* He very early turned his hand to them, and the exercise that they gave him steadied his imagination and taught him how to achieve a new solidity and breadth of representation. By degrees he ventured to intermix the treatment of high political affairs with familiar pictures of daily life, so that what might otherwise have seemed stilted and artificial was reduced to ordinary standards, and set against a background of verisimilitude and reality. His comedy, timidly at first, and at last triumphantly, intruded upon his history ; his vision of reality was

widended to include a single perspective—courts and taverns, kings and highwaymen, diplomatc conferences, battles, street brawls, and the humours of low life. He gave us the measure of his own magnanimity in the two parts of *Henry IV*, a play of incomparable ease, and variety, and mastery. Thence, having perfected himself in his craft, he passed on to graver themes, and, with Plutarch for his text-book, resuscitated the world-drama of the Romans; or breathed life into those fables of early British history which he found in Holinshed. His studies in English history determined his later dramatic career. In Shakespeare's earlier historical work a certain formality and timidity of imagination make themselves felt. His bad kings, Richard the Third and John, are not wholly unlike villains of melodrama. From the first he gave dramatic unity to his histories building them round the character of the king.

29. Mingled Drama. Shakespeare's instinct for reality, his suspicion of all that will not bear to be brought into contact with the gross elements, made him willing to use comedy and tragedy as a touchstone, the one for the other. Nothing that is real in either of them can be damaged by the contact. It is the sham solemnity of grief that is impaired or broken by laughter, and the empty heartless jest that is made to seem inhuman by contrast with the sadness of mortal destiny. A political people like the Greeks, with their passionate belief in the State, will impose their sense of public decorum upon the drama; but the more irresponsible modern temper is not content to forgo the keen intellectual pleasure of paradox and contrast. The description of a funeral in Sott's Journal is a picture after the modern manner: "There is such a mixture of mummery with real grief—the actual mourner perhaps heart-broken, and all the rest making solemn faces, and whispering observations on the weather and public news, and here and there a greedy fellow enjoying the cake and wine. To me it is a farce full of most tragical mirth." Shakespeare keeps the mirth and the tragedy close together, with no disrespect done to either. He narrates serious events, and portrays great crises in history, to the accompaniment of a comic chorus.

30. An Invention. The mirror-scene at the deposition, which, like the sleep-walking scene in *Macbeth*, seems to have been wholly Shakespeare's invention—is a wonderful summary and parable of the action of the play.

31. Political Opinions. It was natural enough that his political opinions should take their colour from his courtly companions, whose business was politics ; nor was his own profession likely to alter his sympathies.

32. Great Tragedies. In the great tragedies Shakespeare comes at last face to face with the mystery and cruelty of human life. He had never been satisfied with the world of romance, guarded like a dream from all external violence ; and his plays, when they are arranged in order, exhibit the gradual progress of the invasion of reality. At first he gently and humorously suggests the contrast : the most lifelike characters in the earlier plays are often those which are invented and added by himself. But in the great tragedies the most fully conceived characters are no longer supernumeraries ; they are the heart of the play. When Shakespeare grappled with the ultimate problems of life he had the help of no talisman or magict script. Doctrine, theory, metaphysics, morals—how should these help a man at the last encounter? Men forge themselves these weapons, and glory in them, only to find them an encumbrance at the hour of need. Shakespeare's many allusions to philosophy and reason show how little he trusted them. The vision, as it was seen by Shakespeare, is so solemn, and terrible, and convincing in its reality, that there are few, perhaps, among his readers who have not averted or covered their eyes. It is not true to say that in these tragedies character is destiny. Othello is not a jealous man ; he is a man carried off his feet ; wave-drenched and blinded by the passion of love. Macbeth is not a murderous politician ; he is a man possessed. Lear no doubt has faults ; he is irritable and exacting and the price that he pays for these weaknesses of old age is that they let loose hell. Hamlet is sensitive, thoughtful, generous, impulsive, —"a pure, noble and most moral nature"—yet he does

not escape the extreme penalty, and at the bar of a false criticism, he too is made guilty of the catastrophe. But Shakespeare, who watched his heroes, awe-struck, as he saw them being drawn into the gulf, passed no such judgment on them. In his view of it, what they suffer is out of all proportion to what they do and are. They are presented with a choice, and the essence of the tragedy is that choice is impossible. Macbeth commits a foul crime ; but Shakespeare's tragic stress is laid on the hopelessness of the dilemma that follows, and his great pity for mortality makes the crime a lesser thing. A play is not a collection of the biographies of those who appear in it. It is a grouping of certain facts and events round a single centre, so that they may be seen at a glance. A profound sense of fate underlines all Shakespeare's tragedies. Without this sense of fate, this appreciation of the tides that bear man with them, whether he swim this way or that, tragedy would be impossible.

33. Last Phase. In the plays of Shakespeare's closing years there is a pervading sense of quiet and happiness which seems to bear witness to a change in the mind of their author. There is still tragic material in plenty, and there are some high-wrought tragic scenes ; but the tension is soon relaxed ; in two of the plays the construction is loose and rambling ; in all three there is a free vein given to humour and fantasy. It is as if Shakespeare were weary of the business of the drama, and cared only to indulge his whim. He was at the top of his profession, and was no longer forced to adapt himself to the narrower conventions of the stage. He might write what he liked, and he made full use of his hard-earned liberty. The sense of relief which comes with these last plays, after the prolonged and heightened anguish of the tragedies, seems to suggest the state of convalescence, when the mind wanders among happy memories, and is restored to a delight in the simplest pleasures.

34. Romances. The tragedies must be reckoned his greatest achievement, so that it may sound paradoxical to speak of the sudden change from tragedy to

Romance as if it betokened a recovery from disease. Yet no man can explore the possibilities of suffering, as Shakespeare did, to dark end, without peril to his own soul. The instinct of self-preservation keeps most men from adventuring near to the edge of the abyss. The inevitable pains of life they will nerve themselves to endure, but they are careful not to multiply them by imagination, lest their strength should fail. For many years Shakespeare took upon himself the burden of the human race, and struggled in thought under the oppression of sorrows not his own. That he turned at last to happier scenes, and wrote the Romances, is evidence, it may be said, that his grip on the hard facts of life was loosened by fatigue, and that he sought refreshment in irresponsible play.

And this perhaps is true ; but the marvel is that he ever won his way back into a world where play is possible. He was not unscathed by the ordeal : the smell of the fire had passed on him. There are many fearful passages in the Tragedies, where the reader holds his breath from sympathy with Shakespeare's characters and apprehension of the madness that threatens them. But there is a far worse terror when it begins to appear that Shakespeare himself is not aloof and secure ; that his feothold is precarious on the edge that overlooks the gulf. Some, recognising it, have conceived of Shakespeare as a man whose mind was unbalanced by an excess of emotional sensibility. The excess may be allowed ; it is the best part of his wealth ; but it must not be taken to imply defect and poverty elsewhere. We do not and cannot know enough of his life even to guess at the experiences which may have left their mark on the darkest of his writings. We do know that only a man of extraordinary strength and serenity of temper could have emerged from these experiences unspoilt. Many a life has been wrecked on a tenth part of the accumulated suffering which finds a voice in the tragedies.

35. **Style.** From the first he was a lover of language, bandying words like tennis-balls adorning his theme

"with many holiday and lady terms," proving that a sentence is but a cheveril glove to a good wit, so quickly the wrong side may be turned outward. He had a mint of phrases in his brain, an exchequer of words; he had fed of the dainties that are bred in a book; his speech was a very fantastical banquet. This early practice gave him an assured mastery so that when his thoughts mutiplied and strengthened he was able to express himself. There has never been a writer who came nearer to adequate verbal cxpression to the subtlest turns of consciousness, the flitting shadows and half-conceived ideas and purposes which count for so much in the life of the mind—which determine action, indeed, although they could not be rationally formulated by a lawyer as a plea for action. His language, it is true, is often at its simplest when the thought is most active. His was the age before the Academies, when the processes of popular and literary education had not yet multiplied definitions and hardened usages. There is truth in the common saying that the English language was still fluid in the time of Queen Elizabeth. No man, even if he had the mind to do it, would now dare to write like Shakespeare. The body of precedent has been enormously increased; science and controversy have been busy year after year, limiting and distinguishing the meanings of words, for the sake of exactness and uniformity. Hence, although even the most original writers cannot very seriously modify the language that he uses, Shakespeare enjoyed a freedom of invention unknown to his successors. He coins words lavishly, and assigns new meanings to old forms. He knows nothing of the so-called parts of speech; where he lacks a verb he will coin it from the first noun or adjective that comes to hand. The more or less precise significations which are now attached to certain Latin prefixes and suffixes are all disordered and mixed in his use of them.

36. Grammar. He violates almost every grammatical rule, and, in accordance with what is, after all, the best English usage, neglects formal concord in the interests of a vaguer truth of impression. The number and person of a verb, in his English, are regulated by the

meaning of the subject, not by its grammetical form. His language is often too far-fetched, and owes too much to books to be called colloquial ; but the syntax and framework of his sentences have all the freedom of the most impulsive speech.

37. Mature Style. If there is one mark which more than another distinguishes Shakerpeare's mature style from all other writings whatsoever, it is his royal wealth of metaphor. He always loved the high figurative fashion, and in his early writing he was sometimes patient with a figure elaborating it with care, to make it go upon all fours. His thought presses on from metaphor to metaphor, any one of them more than good enough for a workaday poet ; he strings them together, and passes them rapidly before the eye, each of them bringing its glint of colour and suggestion. His so-called mixed metaphors are not mixed, but succcssive ; the sense of mixture is produced by a rapidity of thought in the writer which baffles the slower reader, and buries him under the missiles that he fails to catch.

IMPORTANT QUESTIONNAIRE

The answers to the important University questions, posed here in this 'Questionnaire' may be found in Section II introducing the author. The students are advised to prepare themselves thoroughly in the light of these questions :—

- Give a brief biographical sketch of Shakespeare.
- It is said that the flower of Shakespeare's genius blossomed forth in London. Why ?
- Write a note on the England of Shakespeare's days.
- Trace the development of Shakespeare's dramatic career through various periods.
- Give a classification of Shakespeare's plays.

● What are the chief features of Shakespearean drama ?

● Write a note on each of the following :—

(1) Shakespeare's genius, (2) Sentimental transcendentalism in Shakespeare, (3) Shakespeare's insight into character, (4) Shakespeare's skill at creation of atmosphere.

● A critic claims, "Shakespeare, starting with the world no man has made, and never indeed abandoning it, made many worlds within it." Discuss.

● "In Shakespearean tragedy the tragic frailty is conscious." Comment.

● "Shakespearean calamities proceed mainly from the actions of the characters in a story." Discuss.

● "All action in Shakespearean tragedies proceeds from conflict." Illustrate.

● "The hero in a Shokespearean play is an exceptional being." Prove.

● What are the various characteristics of Shakespearean tragedy ?

● Discuss the various forms in which "the supernatural" appears in Shakespeare's plays.

● "The exposition of a Shakespearean play is very skilful." Discuss.

● What do you understand by 'crisis' ? Write a note on 'climax' of a Shakespearean play.

● Discuss the various stages through which the plot of a Shakespearean play develops to its conclusion.

● Give an estimate of Shakespeare as a dramatic artist.

● 'Shakespeare possessed high intuitive sympathy for man.' Comment.

● 'It was Shakespeare's power of imagination through which he could make dreams of fancy look like realities of actual life.' Discuss.

● 'Shakespeare's characters are creatures of woods and wilds not walled towns, not grouped and toned to persue a comic exhibition of the narrower world of the society.' Comment.

● Morton Luce remarks that Shakespeare is 'supreme for his wit while it ranges from word-play to wisdom.' Discuss.

● "Shakespeare has a gift of using most minute and secret artifices by which he makes a feeling steal into our souls."—(Lessing.) Discuss.

● Write a note on the following :—

(1) "Shakespeare's philosophy of life, (2) Comic element in Shakespeare's plays, (3) Shakespearean dialogue, (4) Shakespeare's style, (5) Shakespeare's use of prose and verse, and (6) His plots.

● "The power of Shakespeare's utterances springs from this that all his statmements carry with them the immediate warrant of experience."—(Raleigh.) Discuss.

● "The central drama of Shakespeare's mind is the tragedy of the life of imagination."—Discuss.

● "Shakespeare works on a story, concealing its barren ugliness under the life of his own creation."—Comment.

● "Every single character in Shakespeare is as much individual as those in life itself ; it is as impossible to find any two alike."—(Pope.) Discuss.

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SECTION III

INTRODUCTION TO MACBETH

The Title of the Play

Shakespeare has appropriately styled this play as *Macbeth*, because the central figure from the beginning to the end of the play is Macbeth himself. The play begins with a glorious victory won by Macbeth; it ends at the inglorious death met by him. The theme of the play is, no doubt, *ambition*, but this ambition too is that of Macbeth. Looked as a whole, this play is a psychological study of Macbeth's character in particular. We study how the passions of souls soar into those realms of ambition where the voice of conscience is too feebly heard to be effective. Immediately next to Macbeth stands Lady Macbeth. She pushes the play forward where its movement is slowed down by the curbs applied by Macbeth's conscience. The play, thus, revolves round Macbeth who stands in blood and darkness.

THE THEME OF MACBETH

The theme of *Macbeth* is *ambition.* It is due to this reason that this play is often described as a 'tragedy of ambition.' We observe in this play the gradual ruin and degradation of a noble nature under the stress of ambition. The plot proceeds forward because Macbeth is overtaken by temptation which appears in the guise of ambition. The fact is that whenever temptation approaches high souls it adopts a subtle form of ambition. The seeds of this high-soaring ambition are planted in the mind of a great soldier as Macbeth is, by a brilliant military victory as well as by the mysterious prophecy of the witches who by their predictions add fuel to the fire. Macbeth is so thrilled into ambition that the idea of murdering the king creeps in his mind. In order to make his own way to the throne, he walks through blood. The idea of sinful murder is repugnant to his better nature and we expect

in the beginning that a brave general of such a noble nature would recoil with horror at such a mean idea crossing his mind. It, however, takes a definite shape and transforms itself into determination. The 'resolute'; 'unbending, and 'imperious' will of Lady Macbeth strengthens his determination. His conscience persuades him to lead a life of unambitious loyalty but such persuasions prove to be too feeble against' the mighty forces of ambition dominating his mind. The Weird Sisters cast their influence from the background. Lady Macbeth reduces the strong conscience of her husband into inactivity by her 'grim' and 'iron-willed' earnestness. The mainspring of the action in this drama is, therefore, Ambition—a selfish ambition or an illegitimate desire "to posses what he is not morally or legally entitled to." This is the 'frailty' in Macbeth's character and this frailty is *conscious*. Macbeth feels that he is guilty of accommodating an ambition which is selfish, immoral and illegal. Shakaspeare's hero has always a weakness of which he is conscious like Macbeth. He is continually persued by the hauntings of conscience. His heart is tormented with the fear of the harmful consequences of the king's murder. In the character of Lady Macbeth also ambition plays a dominant role. In its nature, however, this ambition is different from that of Macbeth. She has a 'selfless ambition.' This ambition is more consistent on account of her utter disregard of consequences whether moral or material. Her ambition is more 'sanguine' and more courageous than that of Macbeth. Her love for her husband and her misguided sense of self-sacrifice enforce her decision. Her resolutions are further strengthened by the supernatural forces which are working on both the husband and wife. Thus, ambition dominates Macbeth and his lady alike, and forms a pivot round which the whole plot revolves. The theme or the central idea of this play is, therefore, ambition.

MACBETH IN ABSTRACT

Macbeth is Shakespeare's great *tragedy of ambition and retribution*. It was written in about the year 1606.

Shakespeare had found the prose story in *Holinshed's Chronciles.* Critics acknowledge it to be a masterpiece tragedy in which the *passions of souls* have been painted by the dramatist "with a brush dipped in *blood and darkness*". At every turn of the story we find horror and blood. All characters, including Duncan's guards, Banquo, Macduff's children, are smeared with blood.

gist

Story in Abstract. Two generals, Macbeth and Banquo, have just returned from a campaign in the north after winning a glorious victory. While they are in the way they meet three witches, who predict kingship for Macbeth and Banquo's children. Some of these predictions come to be true on the spot. King Duncan, out of his pleasure to honour his victorious general, visits his castle with a programme of passing a night there. Macbeth is persuaded by his wife, Lady Macbeth, to kill King Duncan. Ambition dominates Macbeth's conscience—he sees a vision of a phantasmal dagger hanging in the air before him. He murders his royal guest. But his conscience continues to prick his heart at his guilt even when he is already crowned at Scone after the king's murder. He fears that the prophecy of the witches regarding Banquo and his children might come true and, therefore, he gets him and some of his children killed. At the state banquet he is horrified to see Banquo's ghost. As he is deep in crime, he has no resource but to go deeper into it so that at last he becomess a bloody tyrant. His career ends at Dunsinane castle where Malcolm and Macduff, the two sons of the slain King Duncan, lead a force of ten thousand English soldiers and besiege Macbeth's castle. The witches have already predicted that nobody would be able to harm him till Birnam wood comes to Dunsinane, and that no person born of woman would be able to cause him any injury. Macbeth completely relies on these forecasts and as he knows that Birnam wood is immovable he begins to think himself above harm. The enemy, however, approaches with cut branches from Birnam wood to cover their march. Macbeth is struck with terror to see the wood approaching. He, however, relies on the other part of the assurance of the witches that no

one of woman born would harm him and rushes forth to the battle. There he meets Macduff who tells him that he was ripped from his mother's womb and is, therefore, not woman born in the strict sense of the term. Macbeth is overtaken by despair at this discovery. He attacks Macduff but is ultimately overcome and is beheaded.

SUMMARY OF MACBETH

Macbeth and the Witches. The story of Macbeth as described by Charles and Mary Lamb is as follows :—

When Duncan the Meek reigned as king of Scotland, there lived a great Thane or Lord called Macbeth. This Macbeth was a near kinsman to the king, and had cared for his valour and conduct in the wars ; an example of which he had lately given, in defeating a rebel army assisted by the troops of Norway in terrible numbers.

The two Scottish Generals, Macbeth and Banquo, returning victorious from this great battle, their way lay over a blasted heath, where they were stopped by the strange appearance of three figures like women, expcept that they had beards, and their withered skins and wild attire made them look not like any earthly creatures. Macbeth first addressed them, when they, seemingly offended, laid each one her choppy finger upon her skinny lips, in token of silence ; and the first of them saluted Macbeth with the title of Thane of Glamis.

The General was not a little startled to find himself known by such creatures ; but how much more, when the second of them followed up that salute by giving him the title of Thane of Cawdor, to which honour he had no pretensions ; and again the third bid him, "All hale ! king that shalt be hereafter." Such a prophetic greeting might well amuse Macbeth who knew that while the king's sons lived he could not hope to succeed to the throne. Then turn ing to Banquo, they pronounced him, in a sort of riddling terms, to be *lesser than Macbeth and greater ! not so happy, but*

much happier; and prophesied that though he should never reign, yet his sons after him should be kings of Scotland. They then turned into air and vanished, by which the Generals knew them to be the Weird Sisters, or witches.

While they stood pondering on the strangeness of this adventure, there arrived certain ministers from the king, who were employed by him to confer upon Macbeth the dignity of Thane of Cawdor, and an event miraculously corresponding with the predictions of the witches astonished Macbeth and he stood wrapped in amazement, unable to make reply to the ministers ; and in that point of time swelling hopes arose in his mind that the predictions of the third witch might in like manner have its accomplishment and that one day he should reign as king in Scotland.

Turning to Banquo, he said, "Do you not hope that your children shall be kings when what the witches promised to me has so wonderfully come to pass ?" "That hope," answered the General, "might enkindle you to aim at the throne ; but often times these ministers of darkness tell us truths in little things, to betray us into deeds of greatest consequences."

Lady Macbeth. But the wicked suggestion of the witches had sunk too deep into the mind of Macbeth to allow him to attend to the warnings of the good Banquo. From that time he bent all his thoughts on how to compass the throne of Scotland.

Macbeth had a wife, to whom he indicated the strange predictions of the Weird Sisters, and its partial accomplishment. She was a bad ambitious woman, and so as her husband and herself could arrive at greatness, she cared not by which means. She spurred on the reluctant purpose of Macbeth (who felt compunction at the thoughts of blood) and did not cease to represent the murder of the king as a step absolutely necessary to the fulfilment of the flattering prophecy.

The Murder of Duncan by Macbeth. It happened this time that the king, who out of his royal condescension would often-times visit his principal nobility upon gracious terms, came to Macbeth's house attended by his two sons, Malcolm and Donalbain, and a numerous train of thanes and two attendants, the more to honour Macbeth for the triumphful success of his wars.

The castle of Macbeth was pleasantly situated, and the air about it was sweet and wholesome, which appeared by the nests which the martlet and swallow had built under all the jutting friezes and on buttresses of the building, wherever it found a place of advantage; for where those birds most breed and haunt, the air is observed to be delicate. The king entered well-pleased with the place, and not less so with the attentions and respect of his honoured hostess, Lady Macbeth, who had the art of covering treacherous purposes with smiles; and could look like an innocent flower, while she was indeed a serpent under it. (snake in the grass).

The king being tired with his journey, went early to bed, and in his state-room, two grooms of his chamber (as was the custom) slept beside him. He had been unusually pleased with his reception, and had made presents before he retired to his principal officers; and among the rest, had sent a rich diamond to Lady Macbeth, greeting her by the name of his most kind hostess.

Now was the middle of night, when over half the world of nature seems dead, and wicked dreams abuse men's minds asleep, and none but the wolf and the murderer is abroad. This was the time when Lady Macbeth walked to plot the murder of the king. She would not have undertaken a deed so abhorrent to her sex, but that she feared her husband's nature, that it was too full of the milk of human kindness, to do a contrived murder. She knew him to be ambitious but withal to be scrupulous, and not yet prepared for that height of crime which commonly in the end accompanies inordinate ambition. She

had won him to consent to the murder, but she doubted his resolution ; and she feared that the natural tenderness of his disposition (more humane than her own) would come between and defeat the purpose.

So with her own hands armed with a dagger, she approached the king's bed ; having taken care to ply the grooms of his chamber so with wine that they slept intoxicated, and careless of their charge. There lay Duncan in a sound sleep after the fatigues of his journey, and as she viewed him earnestly, there was something in his face, as he slept, which resembled her own father ; and she had not the courage to proceed.

She returned to confer with her husband. His resolution had begun to stagger. He considered that there were strong reasons against the deed. In the first place he was not only a subject, but a near kinsman to the king ; and he had been his host and entertainer that day, whose duty, by the laws of hospitality, it was to shut the door against his murderers, not bear the knife himself. Then he considered how just and merciful a king this Duncan had been, how clear of offence to his subjects, how loving to his nobility, and in particular to him ; that such kings are the peculiar care of Heaven, and their subjects doubly bound to revenge their deaths. Besides by the favours of the king Macbeth stood high in the opinion of all sorts of men, and how would those honours be stained by the reputation of so foul a murder !

In these conflicts of the mind Lady Macbeth found her husband inclining to the better part, and resolving to proceed no further. But she being a woman not easily shaken from her evil purpose, began to pour in at his ears words which infused a portion of her own spirit into his mind, assigning reason upon reason why he should not shrink from what he had undertaken ; how easy the deed was ; how soon it would be over ; how the action of one short night would give to all their nights and days to come sovereign sway and royalty !

Then she threw contempt on his change of purpose, and accused him of fickleness and cowardice. Then she added, how practicable it was to lay the guilt of the dead upon the drunken sleepy grooms. And with the valour of her tongue she so chastised his sluggish resolutions, that he once more summoned up courage to the bloody business.

So, taking the dagger in his hand, he softly stole in the dark to the room where Duncan lay : and as he went, he thought he saw another dagger in the air, with the handle towards him, and on the blade and at the point of it drops of blood; but when he tried to grasp it, it was nothing but air, a mere phantasm proceeding from his own hot and oppressed brain and the business he had in hand. Getting rid of this fear, he entered the king's room, whom he despatched with one stroke of his dagger. Just as he had done the murder, one of the grooms, who slept in the chamber, laughed in his sleep, and the other cried "Murder !" which woke them both ; but they said a sort of prayer; one of them said, "God bless us!" and the other answered "Amen," and addressed themselves to sleep again. Macbeth, who stood listening to them, tried to say "Amen," when the fellow said "God bless us !" but though he had most need of a blessing, the word stuck in his throat, and he could not pronounce it.

Again he thought he heard a voice which cried, "Sleep no more. Macbeth doth murder sleep, the innocent sleep, that nourishes life." Still it cried, "Sleep no more," to all the house, "Glamis hath murdered sleep and therefore Cawdor shall sleep no more, Macbeth shall sleep no more."

With such horrible imaginations Macbeth returned to his listening wife who began to think he had failed of his purpose, and that the deed was somehow frustrated. He came in so distracted a state that she reproached him with his want of firmness, and sent him to wash his hands of the blood which stained them, while she took his dagger, with the purpose to stain the cheeks of the grooms with blood, to make it seem their guilt.

Morning came, and with it the discovery of the murder, which could not be concealed and though Macbeth and his lady made a great show of grief, and the proof against the grooms (the dagger being produced against them and their faces smeared with blood) were sufficiently strong, yet the entire suspicion fell upon Macbeth, whose inducements to such a deed were so much more forcible than such poor silly grooms could be supposed to have; and Duncrn's two sons fled. Malcolm, the eldest, sought for refuge in the English court; and the youngest, Donalbain, made his escape to Ireland.

The Death of Banquo through Macbeth. The king's sons should have succeeded him ; having thus vacated the throne, Macbeth as next heir was crowned king, and thus the prediction of the weird sisters was literally accomplished.

Though placed so high, Macbeth and his queen could not forget the prophecy of the Weird Sisters, that though Macbeth should be king, yet not his children, but the children of Banquo, should be kings after him. The thought of this, and that they had defiled their hand with bood, and done so great crimes, only to place the posterity of Banquo upon the throne, so rankled within them, that they determined to put to death both Banquo and his son, to make void the predictions of the Weird Sisters, which in their own case had been so remarkably brought to pass.

For this purpose they made a great supper, to which they invited all the chief thanes ; and among the rest with marks of particular respect, Banquo and his son Fleance were invited.

struggle

The way by which Banquo was to pass to the palace at night was beset by murderers, appointed by Macbeth, who stabbed Banquo; but in the scuffle Fleance escaped. From that Fleance decended a race of monarchs who afterwards filled the Scottish throne, ending with James

the Sixth of Scotland and the First of England, under whom the two crowns of England and Scotland were united.

At supper, the queen, whose manners were in the highest degree affable and royal, played the hostess with a gracefulness and attention which conciliated every one present, and Macbeth discoursed freely with the thanes and noble, saying, that all that was honourable in the country was under his roof, if he had but his good friend Banquo present, whom yet he hoped he should rather have to chide for neglect than to lament for any mischance. Just at these words the ghost of Banquo, whom he had caused to be murdered, entered the room and placed himself on the chair which Macbeth was about to occupy. Though Macbeth was a bold man, and one who could have faced the devil without trembling, at this horrible sight his cheeks turned white with fear, and he stood quite unmanned with his eyes fixed upon the ghost.

His queen and all the nobles, who saw nothing, but perceived him gazing (as they thought) upon an empty chair, took it for a fit of distraction ; and she reproached him, whispering that it was but the same fancy which made him see the dagger in the air when he was about to kill Duncan. But Macbeth continued to see the ghost, and gave no heed to all they could say, while he addressed it with distracted words, yet so significant, that his queen, fearing the dreadful secret would be disclosed, in great haste dismissed the guests, excusing the infirmity of Macbeth as a disorder he was often troubled with.

To such dreadful fancies Macbeth was subject. His queen and he had their sleep afflicted with terrible dreams, and the blood of Banquo troubled them more than the escape of Fleance, whom now they looked upon as father to a line of kings who should keep their posterity out of the throne. With these miserable thoughts they found no peace, and Macbeth determined once more to seek out the Weird Sisters, and know from them the worst.

The Visit of Macbeth to the Witches. Macbeth sought the witches in a cave upon the heath, where they, who knew by foresight of his coming, were engaged in preparing their dreadful charms, by which they conjured up infernal spirits to reveal to them the future.

Their horrid ingredients were toads, bats, and serpents, the eye of a newt, and the tongue of a dog, the leg of a lizard, and the wing of the night owl, the scale of a dragon, the tooth of a wolf, the maw of the ravenous salt-sea shark, the mummy of a witch, the root of the poisonous hemlock (this to have effect must be dug in the dark), the gall of a goat, and the liver of a Jew, with slips of the yew-tree that roots itself in graves, and the finger of a dead child : all these were set on to boil in a great kettle, or cauldron, which, as fast as it grew too hot, was cooled with a baboon's blood : to these they poured in the blood of a sow that had eaten her young, and they threw into the flame the grease that had sweated from a murderer's gibbet. By these charms they bound the infernal spirits to answer their questions.

It was demanded of Macbeth, whether he would have his doubts resolved by them or by their masters, the spirits. He, nothing daunted by the dreadful ceremonies which he saw, boldly answered, "Where are they ? Let me see them." And they called the spirits, which were three. And the first arose in the likeness of an armed head, and he called Macbeth by name, and bid him beware of the Thane of Fife; for which caution Macbeth thanked him ; for Macbeth had entertained a jealousy of Macduff, the Thane of Fife.

And the second spirit arose in the likeness of a bloody child, and he called Macbeth by name, and bid him have no fear, but laugh to scorn the power of man, for none of woman born should have power to hurt him : and he advised him to be bloody, bold and resolute. "Then live, Macduff!" cried the king, "What need I fear of thee ? But yet I will make assurance doubly sure. Thou

shalt not live ; that I may tell pale-hearted Fear it lies, and sleep in spite of thunder."

That spirit being dismissed, a third arose in the form a child crowned, with a tree in his hand. He called Macbeth by name, and comforted him against conspiracies, saying that he should never be vanquished, until the wood of Birnam to Dunisnane hill should come against him. "Sweet bodement! good!" cried Macbeth. "Who can unfix the forest, and move it from its earthbound roots ? I see I shall live the usual period of man's life, and not be cut off by a violent death. Tell me, if your art can tell so much, if Banquo's issue shall ever reign in this kingdom ? "

Here the cauldron sank into the ground, and a noise of music was heard, and eight shadows, like kings, passed by Macbeth, and Banquo last, who bore a glass which showed the figures of many more, and Banquo, all bloody, smiled upon Macbeth, and pointed to them; by which Macbeth knew that these were the posterity of Banquo, who should reign after him in Scotland ; and the witches, with a sound of soft music, and with dancing, making a show of duty and welcome to Macbeth, vanished. And from this time the thoughts of Macbeth were all bloody and dreadful.

The Invasion of Macbeth's Kingdom. The first thing he heard when he got out of the witches' cave was that Macduff, Thane of Fife, had fled to England, to join that army which was forming against him, with intent to displace Macbeth, and set Malcolm, the right heir, upon the throne. Macbeth, stung with rage, set upon the castle of Macbeth, and put his wife and children, whom the thane had left behind, to the sword, and extended the slaughter to all who claimed the least relationship to Macduff.

These and such-like deeds alienated the minds of all his chief nobility from him. Such as could, fled to join Malcolm and Macduff, who were now approaching

with a powerful army, which they had raised in England; and the rest secretly wished success to their arms, though for fear of Macbeth they could take no active part. His recruits went on slowly. Everybody hated the tyrant; nobody loved or honoured him; but all suspected him, and he began to envy the condition of Duncan, whom he had murdered, who slept soundly in his grave, against whom treason had done its worst: steel nor poison, domestic malice nor foreign levies, could hurt him any longer.

While these things were acting, the queen, who had been the sole partner in his wickedness, in whose bosom he could sometimes seek a momentary repose from those terrible dreams which afflicted them both nightly, died, it is supposed, by her own hand, unable to bear the remorse of guilt, and public hate; by which event he was left alone, without a soul to love or care for him; or a friend to whom he could confide his wicked purposes.

He grew careless of life, and wished for death; but the near approach of Malcolm's army roused in him what remained of his ancient courage, and he determined to die (as he expressed it); "With armour on his back." Besides this, the hollow promises of the witches had filled him with a false confidence, and he remembered the sayings of the spirits, that none of woman born was to hurt him, and that he was never to be vanquished till Birnam Wood should come to Dunsinane, which he thought could never be.

So he shut himself up in his castle, whose impregnable strength was such as defied a siege: here he sullenly awaited the approach of Malcolm. When, upon a day there came a messenger to him, pale and shaking with fear, almost unable to report that which he had seen; for he averred, that as he stood upon his watch on the hill, he looked towards Birnam, and to his thinking the Wood began to move. "Liar and slave!" cried Macbeth; "if thou speakest false, thou shalt hang alive upon the next tree, till famine end thee. If thy tale be true, I

care not if thou dost as much by me" ; for Macbeth now began to fail in resolution, and to doubt the equivocal speeches of the spirits. He was not to fear till Birnam Wood should come to Dunsinane ; and now the Wood did move ! "However," said he, "if this which he avouches be true, let us arm and out. There is no flying hence, nor staying here. I begin to be weary of the sun, and wish my life at an end." With these desperate speeches he sallied forth upon the besiegers, who had now come up to the castle.

The strange appearance, which had given the messenger an idea of a wood moving, is easily solved. When the besieging army marched through the wood of Birnam, Malcolm, like a skilful general, instructed his soldiers to hew down every one a bough and bear it before him by way of concealing the true number of his host. This marching of the soldiers with boughs had at a distance the appearance which had frightened the messenger. Thus were the words of the spirit brought to pass, in a sense different from that in which Macbeth had understood them, and one great hold of his confidence was gone.

The Death of Macbeth in Battle. And now a severe skirmish took place, in which Macbeth, though feebly supported by those who called themselves his friends, but in reality hated the tyrant and inclined to the party of Malcolm and Macduff, yet fought with the extreme of rage and valour, cutting to pieces all who were opposed to him, till he came to where Macduff was fighting, Seeing Macduff, and remembering the caution of the spirit who had counselled him to avoid Macduff above all men, he would have turned, but Macduff, who had been seeking him through the whole fight, opposed his turning, and a fierce contest ensued ; Macduff giving him many foul reproaches for the murder of his wife and children. Macbeth, whose soul was charged enough with blood of that family already, would still have declined the combat ; but Macduff still urged him to it, calling him tyrant, murderer, hell-hound and villain.

Then Macbeth remembered the words of the spirit, how none of woman born should hurt him, and smiling confidently he said to Macduff. "Thou losest thy labour, Macduff. As easily thou mayest impress the air with thy sword as make me vulnerable. I bear a charmed life, which must not yield to one of woman born."

"Despair thy charm," said Macduff, "and let that lying spirit whom thou hast served tell thee, that Macduff was never born of woman, never as the ordinary manner of men is to be born."

"Accursed be the tongue which tells me so!" said the trembling Macbeth, who felt his last hold of confidence give way; "and let never man in future believe the lying equivocation of witches and juggling spirits, who deceive us in words which have double senses, and while they keep their promise literally, disappoint our hope with a different meaning. I will not fight with thee."

"Then live!" said the scornful Macduff, "we will have a show of thee, as men show monsters, and a painted board, on which shall be written 'Here men may see the tyrant!'"

"Never!" said Macbeth, whose courage returned with despair. "I will not live to kiss the ground before young Malcolm's feet, and to be baited with the curses of the rabble. Though Birnam wood be come to Dunsinane, and thou opposed to me, who was never born of woman, yet will I try the last." With these frantic words he threw himself upon Macduff, who, after a severe struggle, in the end overcame him, and cutting off his head, made a present of it to the young and lawful king, Malcolm; who took upon him the Government which, by the machinations of the usurper, he had so long been deprived of and ascended the throne of Duncan, the Meek, amid the acclamations of the nobles and the people."

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BRIEF CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE PLOT

ACT I—SCENE I

Three Witches. The scene opens in a mysterious atmosphere. Three witches appear on a heath amidst thunder and lightning. They are busy talking. Suddenly their conversation turns on Macbeth, a Scottish General and the King's cousin, who is reported as fighting a battle. The witches predict that the battle would end before sunset. They decide to overtake Macbeth somewhere in the desert when he is returning triumphant from the battlefield.

Critical Remarks. (1) This scene does not serve the purpose of exposition as the opening sections usually do. (2) Thus the exposition in case of *Macbeth* is postponed to Scene II. (3) In this scene we gather that a battle is being fought somewhere and that at the end of it the witches are to meet the victorious general, Macbeth. (4) So we are attracted more particularly towards the witches and their activities. (5) Shakespeare aims here to raise the mind to a high tragic tone. (6) We at once feel that we are in a world of moral anarchy where 'fair is foul and foul is fair'. (7) The witches symbolize personified forces of disorder, conflict and disintegration—they are the forces of tragedy and tempest having an aim of wrecking the state of man. (8) Bradley remarks that the atmosphere of this scene is in harmony with the spirit of evil and "moral storm which crashes through the play." (9) Thus, in that critic's opinion, this is a symbolic scene. (10) It is a befitting exposition of the great convulsion which we have to witness in the course of the progress of the plot.

ACT I—SCENE II

The Battle. This scene brings us to a camp near Forres where King Duncan is present with his two sons,

Malcolm and Donalbain. He listens to the account of battle given by a wounded sergeant. According to him Macbeth displayed brilliant bravery, killed Macdonwald and turned the tables upon the enemy. The King of Norway reinforced the adversary in vain because, according to Ross, a Scottish nobleman, victory fell on Macbeth and Banquo in spite of the treacherous help supplied to the King of Norway by the Thane of Cawdor. The King pronounces death sentence cn the thane and confers the title of Thane of Cawdor on Macbeth.

Critical Remarks. (1) This scene contains the 'exposition' in the real sense. (2) The state of affairs in Scotland is not peaceful. (3) King Duncan is faced with three-fold danger—(*a*) Macdonwald's revolt, (*b*) foreign invasion of Sweno, and, (*c*) Thane of Cawdor's treachery. (4) Credit of saving King Duncan from aforesaid danger goes to Macbeth who, with the aid of Banquo, another general, wins victory for the king on account of his personal courage and resource in war. (5) Macbeth is, therefore, acclaimed as 'valour's minion' and 'Bellona's bridegroom." (6) It should be noted that Shakespeare has borrowed some facts from Holinshed for this scene. (7) He has, however, (*a*) compressed the borrowed material, and (*b*) linked together events occurring at different times to maintain interest.

ACT I—SCENE III

The Witches. In this scene the Weird Sisters appear again. According to their settlement they wait for Macbeth's arrival in a wild desert. They talk together of their activites. The First Witch says that she intends to take revenge from a sailor's wife who refused to give her chestnuts which she was munching. The witch tells others that the husband of that woman is a captain of the ship named *The Tiger* in which he has gone to Aleppo and that the witch has decided to follow him there in a sieve in the shape of a tailless rat in order to gnaw a hole in the ship and to torture him in every possible way. The

other witches show their readiness to help her but she curtly refuses because she has herself enough power. All the witches then begin to dance. The sound of a drum is heard and Macbeth approaches.

Predictions. When the two generals enter the scene Banquo is the first to see the unearthly shapes of the witches. He is amazed at their appearance. The first witch addresses Macbeth as Thane of Glamis, the second as Thane of Cawdor, the third as the future king. Macbeth starts at these predictions. Banquo asks the witches to foretell something about him. The witches tell him that though he would not be a king, his issue will possess the Scottish throne. Macbeth is excited. He desires the witches to tell more but is struck with surprise to see them vanish in the air.

Macbeth Bccomes Thane. At this juncture Ross and Angus, two nobelmen of Scotland, appear on the scene and confer on Macbeth the title 'Thane of Cawdor' on behalf of the king. One of the prophetic predictions of the witches is thus fulfilled. Macbeth is so astonished at these unusual happenings that forgetting to thank Ross, he lapses into musings. He, however, thanks the nobleman at last and then the company marches back to appear before the king at the court.

Critical Remarks. (1) This is the most critical scene of the First Act, and is often described as the temptation scene in which the 'weird sisters' rouse ambition in Macbeth. (2) The dark and mysterious witches whom we had met in Scene I appear again in visible form. (3) They symbolize malignant influences in nature which, according to Boas, "are ever on the alert to establish an unholy aliance with the criminal instincts of the human heart." (4) These witches have (*a*) breads, (*b*) choppy hand and (*c*) skinny lips. They are (*d*) nameless, (*e*) sexless and (*f*) equipped with evil powers. (6) The effect of the Weird Sisters upon Macbeth is different from that upon Banquo. According to Chambers, "Banquo sees nothing ominous in the prophecy," but Macbeth is perturbed.

ACT I—SCENE IV

Macbeth in Royal Presence. As the scene opens we know through Malcolm's report to the king that the treacherous Thane of Cawdor has been executed. Soon Macbeth and Banquo, accompanied by Angus and Ross, appear before the king. The king thanks Macbeth in profuse terms. Macbeth assures the king of his firm loyalty. Then the king turns to Banquo and thanks him. Banquo, too, affirms his loyalty to the king. Thereafter the king declares his eldest son, Malcolm, heir-apparent. At the same time he bestows upon him the title of Prince of Cumberland. The king's announcement stirs up flames of ambition in Macbeth's heart. A new impediment seems to bar his way to the throne. His secret unrest increases. The king, then, proposes to honour Macbeth by passing a night at his general's house, 'Inverness Castle', as a guest. This proposal works towards the completion of the plan and creates the possibility of instant practical action for the realisation of his innate ambitious desire.

Critical Remarks. (1) This scene is important because (*a*) it intensifies the conflict in Macbeth's mind, (*b*) it goes a long way to transform Macbeth's intentions into firm resolution, (*c*) it persuades him to take instant action. (2) This scene thus helps the action of the play directly. (3) The effective barrier created by the nomination of Malcolm as Duncan's successor has to be removed by Macbeth before he may think of possessing the throne. (4) The royal declaration urges Macbeth to take direct action against Duncan. (5) The king's resolution to pass a night at Macbeth's castle is the first of a series of lucky accidents indicating that the gods are for the present in favour of Macbeth. (6) The scene offers a fine study in contrast between Duncan's character and the character of Macbeth—the former is frank, the latter is treacherous, the former appreciates the latter's heroism, the latter does not place any value in the former's truthfulness and gratitude. There is an element of dramatic irony in Duncan's expression of extreme happiness—sorrow lurks behind his plenteous joy.

ACT I SCENE V

Lady Macbeth. As the curtain is lifted Lady Macbeth appears reading a letter addressed to her by Macbeth. He has intimately conveyed to her the details of the predictions of the witches. The letter tells her how they have been partially fulfilled. Lady Macbeth puruses the letter very closely. She is lost in thought. She knows that her husband is a man of a soft temperament and that he has a moral sense to some extent. These elements in Macbeth's character cause anxiety in her heart. As two prophecies of the Weird Sisters have come true—Macbeth has been elevated to the position of Thane of Glamis and the Thane of Cawdor—the last prophecy has closer possibility of fulfilment. Being ambitious, Macbeth has flexibility in his moral sense. He may relax his moral standards in order to achieve his objective, no doubt, but there was a fearful possibility also that he may fall a victim to hesitation at the eleventh hour and spoil the whole plan due to his lack of the required amount of dashing spirit. These thoughts lead Lady Macbeth to resolve to galvanize her husband to activity and to make every effort to see the plan thoroughly fulfilled. She determines not to leave anything to chance, because she knows that Macbeth has a fitful nature which carries him into hesitation and defaults.

News of Duncan's Arrival. While Lady Macbeth is lost in deep reflection a messenger comes to inform her about the arrival of King Duncan. This news has an element of surprise and happiness for her. She is almost swept with joy and feels uplifted and transported into a splendid world. She is so stirred up that her imagination begins to play tricks. She takes even the croaking of a raven as being fraught with ominons significance, announing the fated entrance of the king into Inverness Castle. She begins to pray to the spirits to take away from her all qualities of womanhood and human sympathy from her temperament.

Macbeth's Arrival. Suddenly Macbeth arrives at the castle. His lady welcomes him repeating the three

titles pridicted for him by the Weird Sisters. She is ready to welcome the king in a manner befitting a royal personage. She advises Macbeth to put on a deceptive appearance and leave the rest of the plan to be executed by her.

Critical Remarks. (1) In this scene the important figure of Lady Macbeth is introduced for the first time. (2) Her appearance makes us feel that Macbeth is not the leading person, at least, at the initial stage of the drama. (3) We hardly expect that Macbeth would by himself commit the cold-blooded murder of King Duncan. It is Lady Macbeth who makes him get over his horrible imaginings. (4) Lady Macbeth is absolutely free from all superstitious fear. (5) She has much strength of conviction. (6) She possesses strong self-will. (7) Due to all these qualities of temperament she gives a decisive stimulous to her husband's design. (8) Lady Macbeth's character is definitely more impressive than that of her husband. (9) The Lady is not actuated by a personal ambition like her husband—her desire is to see her husband ascend the throne. (10) She is completely devoted to the interests of her husband. (11) Macbeth responds to her feelings—he regards her to be a dearest partner of his present and future glories.

ACT I SCENE VI

Duncan at Inverness Castle. The curtain lifts and Duncan arrives at the castle of Macbeth. It is evening time. Malcolm and Donalbain, the two princes, are with the king. The company consists of a few other lords attending the royal personages. The natural beauty and the rural calm of the country considerably impresses the king who is much pleased. Banquo draws the king's attention to the martlet (a bird) which builds its nest where it finds soothing air. In the meantime, Lady Macbeth appears. The king greets her warmly, and she responds with warmth and sweetness. She assures the king of her deep loyalty. The king is anxious to meet his brave host, Macbeth, and requests Lady Macbeth to conduct him to his honoured host.

Critical Remarks. (1) This scene opens in the peaceful calm of the evening. (2) It stands in contrast with the extreme inward agitation stirring the minds of Macbeth and his lady. (3) They are agitated because they have a secret design of murdering their royal guest, Duncan, who has resolved to pass a night in their house. (4) Feelings of repose are awakened by the lyrical note appearing in the exposition of this scene. (5) This lyricism lends a peculiar dramatic appeal to the scene—we are overwhelmed with the sense of irony, and appreciate the fine dramatic power and vast range of Shakespeare's art. (6) Apart from all that, this scene is important also because it provides a chance for the fulfilment of Macbeth's ambition. (7) Macbeth does not come to the forefront at the king's arrival because he is unable to exhibit the same artificial warmth as his lady can.

ACT I—SCENE VII

Macbeth's Mental Conflict. As the scene opens we find Macbeth lost in fits of musing. He is unsettled. The foremost idea in his mind is the possession of the crown but he is unable to make up his mind to commit Duncan's murder. He is not sure that this murder will end the affair for good. The serious consequences resulting from the crime loom large in his mind. He is reluctant to violate the sacred code of hospitality by putting his guest to death. Being a cousin to the king he has a special regard for him. Moreover, his loyalty does not allow him to hold a dagger against a person who is his king. Duncan is kind and mild. He has great virtues. In such a case it is Macbeth's duty to defend rather than attack the king. Then, again, the king has given him no cause of grievance which might persuade him to put an end to him. His conscience does not allow him to commit such a horrible crime.

Lady Macbeth's Instigation. While Macbeth is so absorbed in cross-currents of thought, Lady Macbeth appears on the scene. Macbeth declares that he does not think it fit to do the deed. Lady Macbeth, who has resolved to carry out the plan in any circumstance, appeals vehemently to her husband for her love'e sake. She

stirs up the powers of manhood in her husband. Macbeth hesitates. Lady Macbeth thereupon levies the charge of cowardice against him. Macbeth's brave nature cannot endure this charge and he yields. He promises that he would do the deed. At the same time, he is labouring under the fear of failure. His wife holds out an assurance that their attempt will succeed without any doubt. She discloses to her husband that she has decided to drug the king's chamberlains who, under its influence, will not be able to know anything about the murder. The blame will be afterwards thrown on their shoulders.

Critical Remarks. (1) In this scene Macbeth's temptation reaches the highest pitch. (2) It contains a soliloquy which is most artistic. (3) It is similar in its excellence to the soliloquy of Othello. (4) With only that exception it stands unparalleled. (5) The thought of evil consequences of the deed unnerves Macbeth. (6) Lady Macbeth with her dominating personality brings the mental conflict of her husband to an end and succeeds in transforming a potentially noble person into a traitor who at last stoops to commit the hideous crime of murder. (7) The conflicting passions of Macbeth rise to the height of tragic intensity. (8) He becomes an entirely different man—formerly he was calm and scheming, now he is torn with the conflict. (9) It is from this point that a steady decline in character is apparent.

ACT II—SCENE I

Banquo and Fleance. The darkness of midnight prevails. Banquo, in spite of feeling the burden of sleep, is vigilant. In the course of his talk with Fleance he refers to his encounter with the witches whose prophecies created a storm in his mind. His sleep is disturbed by all sorts of thoughts assailing his mind. He prays God to help him in getting free from these cursed thoughts.

Macbeth Awake. Banquo and his son, Fleance, are surprised to find Macbeth roaming about at midnight. It seems that he has had no rest at all. Banquo, however, conceals his astonishment and begins to talk to Macbeth

about the immense happiness of the king. He, then, presents to him the costly diamond which the king wished to be presented to his noble hostess, Lady Macbeth. Banquo refers to a dream which he had last night. It was about the Weird Sisters. He is anxious to tell Macbeth what he saw in that dream but Macbeth is not inclined to hear anything about the witches. He softly dismisses the suggestion by telling him that he would hear of it at some other moment. Macbeth says that he wants Banquo to give him some time to have some serious talk which will be useful for him. Banquo in reply, says that he is ready to act on any advice coming from Macbeth provided no injury is caused to his sense of loyalty to the king and the country by that, and provided further that he is not compelled to lose the honours which he enjoys at present.

A Dagger in the Air. Banquo goes out with his son for the night's rest. Macbeth also retires but is not able to sleep. He orders his servants to inform Lady Macbeth to ring the bell when drink is ready for him. Macbeth's mind is wholly occupied with his plan of murdering the king. While he is so absorbed in thought he sees before him an illusion of a dagger hanging in the air. Its handle is turned towards him. He tries to grasp it but it slips away. He stares at it. It seems to move towards Duncan's sleeping chamber. Macbeth sees spots of blood on its hilt and blade. He tries his best to regain his composure and consoles himself by thinking that it is only a horrible vision worked by his imagination and whim.

The Bell. In the course of his soliloquy Macbeth looks out of the window. It is the dead of night. The world is wrapped in silence. The darkness covers all things. It is a moment when wicked dreams hover in the mind of man, when witches offer their rites to their goddess, Hecate, and when the guilty hand moves towards the object of its design in pindrop silence. The consciousness of guilt makes Macbeth afraid of his surroundings. He moves to murder the king. He puts his steps cautiously lest the stones should rattle and disturb the quiet. Suddenly he hears the ring of the bell. It is a call to action—a signal

by Lady Macbeth. He thinks it to be the knell of the king's death. He goes out to do the deed.

Critical Remarks. (1) This scene contains a very important soliloquy of Macbeth. (2) This soliloquy gives us an opportunity of studying his mental condition. (3) The whole scene is dreadful and charged with awe for the intending murderer. (4) In the stillness of night we feel evil influences creeping over the world. (5) The action rushes forward without a pause to its climax and we are still in the stage of rising action. (6) Macbeth's moral scruples have been overcome by the strong will of Lady Macbeth and the plot of Duncan's murder has reached its final stage. (7) In other words the dramatic interest has reached its pitch in this scene. (8) It must, however, be kept in mind that we are still passing through the stage of rising action and have not reached the climax. (9) The real climax comes only when Banquo's murder is committed. (10) Some critics, however, maintain that the fall of action begins after Duncan's murder. (11) This scene is important because it is profoundly psychological, and inspires us with awe. (12) We come to know for the first time that Banquo's peace of mind and soul is disturbed by the mysterious influence of the witches whose fearful vision haunts him in his dreams. (13) Unlike Macbeth, Banquo has strength of loyalty to resist the temptation. (14) Again, he is more frank than Macbeth who is secretive and close, for while the former plainly confesses to the latter that his rest is disturbed by the Weird Sisters, the latter calms him down politely with a promise to discuss the matter later on.

ACT II—Scene II

Lady Macbeth's Soliloquy. Soon Lady Macbeth comes on the stage. In her soliloquy she indicates that the ground for the deed has been well prepared. She has strengthened herself by taking a draught of wine. She has drugged the guards and has kept the daggers ready. She has left the door open which leads to Duncan's chamber. In spite of all these preparations, she is excited and agitated in her mind to such an extent that even the shriek of an owl startles her with fear.

The Murder. While Lady Macbeth is absorbed in soliloquy, Macbeth has gone to the king's room in order to put him to death. Lady Macbeth is waiting outside under great excitement. She imagines that her husband must be about to do the deed, when all of a sudden Macbeth shouts out without thinking that he has heard some sound. When Lady Macbeth hears a shout she thinks for a moment that the guards have woken up. She is struck with fear and despair. She thinks she would have done the deed herself but did not do so because she saw her own father's image in the face of king Duncan.

After the Murder. Macbeth has murdered the King. He now joins his wife in a state of absolute nervousness. His hands are blood-stained. So confused is he that he starts at every sound. Under his agitation he heard two persons talking in the chamber adjacent to that of the king. It appeard to him as if one of them laughed in his sleep while the other cried "Murder." He felt as if one uttered the words "God bless us" and the other said "Amen" to that. Then both of them went to sleep again. So nervous was he at this talk that he was about to utter the word 'Amen' as soon as he heard the words 'God bless us,' but his throat was so choked that he could not speak at all. Lady Macbeth consoles her husband and advises her not to take the matter so seriously because in that case he would go mad. Macbeth, however, is still agitated. He suspects that when he was actually murdering the king he had heard semebody proclaiming the murder.

Lady Macbeth's Tact. Finding that Macbeth has lost control over himself, Lady Macbeth takes command of the situation in her hand. She advises her husband to get his hands washed at once and to return the daggers which he had unwisely brought with him and place them back in Duncan's chamber. She asks him also to go and smear the drugged royal grooms with blood. Macbeth, in his agitation, excitement and nervousness, recoils from taking any step. He does not find himself bold enough to return

to the bloody scene again as suggested by his wife. At that moment Lady Macbeth proves herself more firm and resolute than her husband. She comes to his rescue and herself carries the dagger hurriedly to the room where Duncan's murder was committed.

Knocking. Exactly at this time knocking is heard from within and startles Macbeth. He is so excited that even the slightest noise puts him in fear. He is unable to stand the sight of blood on his hands. Soon his wife returns. She shows her own blood-stained hands to Macbeth and behaves in a manner to show that she does not at all take the affair seriously. Knocking at the door is repeated. Lady Macbeth acts smartly and asks her husband to put on his night-gown at once to pose as if he was just awoken from his sleep.

Critical Remarks. (1) It is said about this section that it has been written with a pen of fire. (2) Although the murder has been transacted off the stage, it seems as if we are witnessing the deed with our own eyes. (3) This scene stands as one of the greatest in the whole range of Shakespearean drama. (4) Shakespeare has built up the atmosphere of horror with perfect surety typical of his dramatic genius. (5) Shakespeare has presented the accessories of horror in a very artistic manner—the mysterious voices, the hooting of the owl and the cry of crickets, all have an effective appeal. (6) We feel as if nature itself is throbbing with consciousness of the moral anarchy and crime. (7) Our pity and terror rise to the pitch when we see Macbeth pathetically confessing his inability to pray and sleep—this terror and pity serves the essential purpose of tragedy. (8) By presenting the death off the stage, Shakespeare incidentally conforms to the classic convention. (9) The triumphant self-control of Lady Macbeth and the spiritual weakness of her husband are both at their height in this scene. The grim irony in Lady Macbeth's confident remarks that only a little water world clear both of them of the deed should be appreciated—the spot on the mental vision cannot be rubbed off: it is perpetual.

ACT II—SCENE III

The Drunken Porter. The knocking at the door rouses the drunken porter who, after laborious efforts, makes himself stand and move. Swaggering and reeling, he drags himself slowly to the castle gate in response to the knocking. He makes some humorously silly remarks thinking himself to be the porter of hell-gate under the intoxicating influence of wine. Throwing open the door he lets the knockers in.

The Visitors. Macduff and Lennox, the two attendant lords of the king, step in. They meet Macbeth in his night-gown pretending to have been roused from his sleep by the noise. Macduff proceeds to the king's chamber because the king had asked him to wake him up at an early hour. Lennox remains behind with Macbeth. He talks with Macbeth about the confusion in nature indicating as if some great calamity would befall the world.

Discovery of the Murder. Macduff immediately returns horror-stricken from the king's chamber with the discovery of murder of the king. It is a piteous spectacle. The news spreads swiftly around. The entire castle is shaken with horror. Lady Macbeth and her husband are joined with Banquo and other Lords who go to the bloody chamber to satisfy themselves and make a display of their grief. Macbeth is in a fit of pretended anger. As the two chamberlains are smeared with blood with their daggers lying unwiped on their pillows, the suspicion of murder is thrown on them and Macbeth, out of his artificial indignation, puts an end to their lives by slaying them with his sword. Thus he secures his position by foisting on the two grooms the charge of murder. Lady Macbeth, unable to stand the strain of horror any more. falls fainting and is carried away.

Princes Escape. The two princes, Malcolm and Donalbain, are convinced of Macbeth's treachery. They seek safety by quietly slipping away. One of them escapes to England and the other to Ireland and the lords are unable to enquire thoroughly into the crime.

Critical Remarks. (1) This scene has often been called the porter Scene. (2) It Provides comic relief. (3) The porter's humorous speech is charged with powerful irony. (4) The monotony of horror and tragedy is relaxed by the introduction of the comic element. (5) The drunken porter's speech shows a wonderful knowledge of human nature which Shakespeare possessed. (6) The porter is, no doubt, a comic figure but the momentary relief given by him through his laughable talk and behaviour, heighten the total effect of the tragedy.

ACT II—SCENE IV

Reactions. The next morning Ross, an old man, talk about the strange and alarming disturbances in nature on the night of the king's murder. The old man declares that he has never seen such a stormy night throughout the seventy odd years of his life. According to Ross the sky seemed to be about to burst with the wickedness of man. The old man says that he has seen an owl chasing and killing a falcon. Ross tells him how Duncan's horses ran wild and attacked their keeper. He remarks that everything in the world appeared to be weird that night. Macduff, who joins the company later, tells how the suspicion of murder rests on the two princes who fled away from the scene. Ross is unable to grasp the motive behind the alleged act of the two princes. Macduff further tells Ross that the king's body was buried in his ancestral vault in Colme-kill. Ross says that he has come to know that Macbeth is going to be crowned King at Scone.

Critical Remarks. (1) This scene and the talk does not promote the action of the play. (2) It has been severely criticised as unworthy of Shakespeare but some critics maintain that as *Macbeth* is mainly a tragedy of atmosphere, this scene contributes to the tragic effects of the plot. (3) The disturbances in nature, the darkness, the owl's chase of the falcon and the wildness of the horses, all heighten the effect of the supernatural and contribute to the development of the plot. (4) This scene gives us, for

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the first time, a breathing space wherein we may look back for a while to take stock of the situation and prepare overselves for the next action. (5) It serves the artistic necessity of drama and gives a chance of grasping the various and conflicting current of emotions. (6) It gives us relief as well.

ACT III—SCENE I

Banquo's Soliloquy. Banquo, through his soliloquy, gives an analysis of his mental condition. The prophecies of the weird women have been fulfilled and left Banquo in doubt between hope and fear rising from the elevation of Macbeth through treacherous means. The mental conflict in Banquo's mind rises from the prophecy of the witches that he will be the root from which will spring a line of kings.

New King and Queen. Macbeth and his lady appear as the new King and Queen and receive Banquo with apparent warmth and cordiality. Macbeth invites him as chief guest at the state banquet to be held at night. Banquo accepts the invitation gratefully. In the course of their talk Banquo discloses that he is riding out that night with his son Fleance and will return after nightfall. As Macbeth is secretly thinking over the plan of murdering Banquo, he decides in his heart to get his purpose achieved at the golden opportunity provided by Banquo's journey with his son at night.

Macbeth's Soliloquy. Dismissing the lords from his presence, Macbeth orders his attendant to bring before him the persons waiting outside to meet him. In the interval, Macbeth reviews his position and we are informed how he is impatient to remove Banquo and gain his peace of mind. In Banquo's presence, his conscience and spirit chastise him. The prophecy of the Weird Sisters regarding Banquo and the future of his children, appear to Macbeth to be full of fearful prospects. He cannot bear to think of Banquo's children inheriting the Scottish throne. It was Macbeth who walked through blood and crime to the throne, of course, not with the aim of profiting thereby

Banquo and his children. He is ready to try to stand against fate and to make the prediction regarding Banquo impossible.

The Murderers. The persons waiting outside to meet the new king were the murderers to be secretly posted by Macbeth to despatch Banquo and his son Fleance to the other world. These persons are presented before Macbeth, who stirs their spirit to incline them to murder Banquo and win the royal favour. He expresses his hatred towards the general and says that he wants to remove him quietly. The murderers are required to do the deed thoroughly in such a manner that no suspicion may possibly arise. Banquo's son, Fleance, must also be put to death along with his father. The murderers express their willingness to do the deed as desired, and are then dismissed with instructions to meet again after an hour to take further orders in this respect.

Critical Remarks. (1) This scene shows a further advance in Macbeth's degeneration into criminality. (2) He leagues himself with three murderers to remove Banquo and his son, Fleance, from his way. (3) He pitches himself against the Weird Sisters who prophesied royalty to Banquo's children—Macbeth now wants to make the throne hereditary in his own line. (4) In this scene we see Macbeth planning Banquo's murder all by himself without the help of his lady—it foreshadows the gradual fading away of the influence of Lady Macbeth. (5) Banquo strongly suspects Macbeth to be the murderer of Duncan but seems to have yielded to evil—he does not seem to be as loyal as Macduff.

ACT III—Scene II

Macbeth's Misgivings. Royalty has failed to bring peace to Macbeth and his wife who are labouring under suspicion and fear surrounding them from all sides. In the opinion of Lady Macbeth there is no remedy for what has been done and therefore her husband should waste no time in brooding under the gloom of what has been done and become past. Macbeth expresses his fear that Banquo

may at any time like, a wounded snake, bite him in turn. He feels so much uneasy and tormented that he does not even take his meals.

Lady Macbeth's Advice. Lady Macbeth's advice to her husband is that he should caste off his excitement and create on his face the expression of jovial welcome before his guests at the state banquet to be given at night. Macbeth accepts this suggestion and asks his wife to concentrate on the problem of Banquo because so long as that man is alive, he cannot feel himself secure. His lady remarks that life is only temporary even in Banquo. Macbeth informs his wife for the first time that he has planned for Banquo's removal and does not require any help in the execution of his schemes. Lady Macbeth takes the news indifferently, but Macbeth's anxiety is apparent—he waits for the fateful moment of night when the deed would be done successfully.

Critical Remarks. (1) This scene is important only so far as it serves the function of prelude to the murder of Banquo. (2) The developments in this scene make it clear that from now on Macbeth is the moving spirit in the tragedy and Lady Macbeth is receding into the background. (3) It seems that Macbeth has detected in his wife an element of weakness and does not think it fit to drag her into the grim details of the crimes planned by him.

ACT III—Scene III

Banquo's Murder. As instructed by Macbeth, the three murderers lurk in the park outside the place at the time when daylight fades into darkness. They wait for the return of Banquo and his son Fleance whom they are required to murder. Suddenly they hear the sound of the galloping of horses. Banquo and Fleance appear riding. They dismount at the gate and, getting a light, walk up the road leading to the palace. The three murderers secretly follow them and putting out the light all of a sudden attack Banquo in the darkness, who shouts to his son to fly away to save his life. Fleance escapes but Banquo is murdered on the spot. He receives twenty deep 'gashes' on his head.

Critical Remarks. (1) It is in this scene that the crisis of the tragedy is reached. (2) Macbeth's success has reached its climax at Banquo's murder. (3) Fleance's escape signalises the future decline of Macbeth's fortune. (4) From this moment the irony of the play is obviously directed against Macbeth and the supernatural powers. (5) We wait now for the punishment which Macbeth has to ultimately receive. (6) The supernatural powers which had so far been favouring Macbeth now set themsolves against him and mark that he is hurled to his final ruin. (7) Unlike Duncan's murder the murder of Banquo is done on the stage—it is charged with thrill and horror which appealed specially to the Elizabethan audience.

ACT III—SCENE IV

State Banquet. In honour of his new dignity, Macbeth has made elaborate arrangements for a royal banquet. Guests have assembled in the state-room of Macbeth's castle. The newly installed king greets the guests and apologises for the absence of his lady who is not yet ready to perform the duties of hostess.

News of the Murder Presently the First Murderer appears at the door. Soon Macbeth goes to meet him. When he is informed of Banquo's murder, he feels relieved but when he knows of Fleance's escape he turns gloomy and nervous. He, however, consoles himself with the idea that Fleance being yet only a boy, there is no immediate danger from him.

Banquo's Ghost. Macbeth's abstraction is soon perceived. As he returns to his chair with the words of apology on his lips and with remarks about Banquo's absence, he sees it occupied by the ghost of Banquo who is shaking his head at him. Macbeth is unnerved and terrified to an extreme degree. He expresses his horror, but the guests are not able to understand the real cause of his excitement. When he frantically stares at the ghost and makes wild remarks, his lady apologizes to the guests for his distraction explaining this wild behaviour to the

guests she tells them that he is subject to such fits ever since his childhood. She requests them not to take any notice of it because that will increase his excitement. In the meantime, the Ghost of Banquo vanishes and Macbeth, at the suggestion of his lady, hurries back to the company. But as soon as he gains some self-possession, the ghost of Banquo appears again. This time Macbeth's agitation rises to its pitch. He is almost maddened with terror. Lady Macbeth, finding that her husband is almost on the point of betraying all secrets in his fit of horror, realizes the danger and hastily breaks up the gathering explaining to the guests that natural infirmity of the king is responsible for his wildness. Macbeth, however, regains some courage when the ghost disappears a second time. He now resolves to search out the witches again and hear about his future.

Critical Remarks. (1) The supernatural constitutes the chief appeal of this scene. (2) This supernatural element is neither purely subjective nor objective. (3) Banquo's ghost is (*a*) visible and (*b*) most ghostly. (4) Our attention in this scene is focussed on the psychological aspects of the plot. (5) Macbeth's mental powers have undergone perceptible degeneration—it is an inevitable consequence of murder. (6) Banquo's ghost is too terrible for Macbeth—even more than the imaginary dagger. (7) Lady Macbeth is continually receding into the background.

ACT III—Scene V

Hecate. Hecate, the mistress of the witches, appears on a heath. She enters in extreme anger and takes the three witches to task for having predicted the future to Macbeth without her previous permission. She orders them to meet her the next morning at the pit of Acheron and try to set right their mistake. She refers to a plan of drawing Macbeth to his ruin by means of a fearful charm, creating in him a sense of over-confidence and security which is the chief enemy of a mortal being.

Critical Remarks. (1) This scene has severely been

criticised and rejected by scholars as 'Unshakespearean.' (2) Critics maintain that Hecate's part has been copied down by Shakespeare from Middleton's portion 'The Witch.' (3) The mixture of classical myth and Nordic superstition, though strange, is yet in tune with the spirit of Shakespeare's time when the classical influence on English literature was very deep.

ACT III—SCENE VI

Macbeth's Tyranny. Lennox and another lord talk about Macbeth's tyranny. He makes satirical remarks about Macbeth's policies and looks with suspicion at the murders or King Duncan and Banquo. The responsibility of the king's murder, remarks he, has been beautifully foisted on grooms and the two princes, namely Malcolm and Donalbain, while that of the murder of Banquo rests on his son, Fleance, who flew away to leave matters ambiguous. Thus they deserve punishment. Macduff too stands exiled from Scotland because he failed to be present at the state banquet held by Macbeth, the tyrant and usurper.

Macduff at English Court. The lord tells Lennox that Malcolm, the eldest son of Duncan, is now at the English Court of Edward the Confessor and that Macduff has also gone there in order to seek the support of the English king to get his country freed from the clutches of the tyrant.

Critical Remarks. (1) In this scene we find some sidelight being thrown upon the main story—it is thus like Scene IV of Act II. (2) It does not in any way promote the action of the play or contribute to the development of its plot. (3) Scene IV of Act II fulfilled the function of the chorus in Greek tragedies; this scene serves a similar purpose. (4) In this scene we discover that a storm of suspicion has arisen against Macbeth due to his inadequate behaviour in state affairs. (5) We now wait for the coming retribution and the approaching ruin of the tyrant.

ACT IV—SCENE I

The Witches. As ordered by Hecate, the mistress of the witches, the Weird Sisters, who had appeared in the first scene and had predicted Macbeth's future, appear assembled in a cavern. They are busy with the preparation of a powerful magical liquor. Various odd things like the eye of a lizard, the toe of a frog, the nose of a Turk, etc., etc., are thrown into the boiling cauldron in which the liquor is being prepared. The witches continue to mutter their mystic incantations all the while. Suddenly they begin to dance round the cauldron on the arrival of Hecate. The thumb of the second witch pricks and she at once predicts that something wicked is approaching that way. Immediately after this prediction, Macbeth appears.

Macbeth's Interview with the Witches. Macbeth comes to the witches and demands fuller information regarding his future. Thereupon the First Witch enquires whether he would like to hear the answer from their own mouths or from the mouths of their masters. Macbeth desires to hear the answers from the mouths of their masters. The witches then immediately pour something in the cauldron and recite some charms. Suddenly an armed head rises from the cauldron and warns Macbeth against the thane of Fife, Macduff. Next appears the apparition of a bloody child who bids that Macbeth need not fear any man born of woman. A third phantom wearing a crown predicts that he will be in an invincible position until Birnam wood would come to Dunsinane hill. Macbeth wants to know if Banquo's descendants would ever reign. In answer to this question, he is shown a procession of eight kings followed by Banquo's ghost. As Banquo's ghost passes by Macbeth, he triumphantly smiles. Macbeth is much depressed and the witches try to cheer him up with music and dancing. Then they vanish suddenly into the air.

Macduff's Flight. At this moment Lennox enters the scene. He informs Macbeth that Macduff's flight to

England has been ascertained. This news upsets Macbeth too and he decides to seize Macduff's castle by surprise. He aims to put his wife and children to death so that nobody might remain alive in his line.

Critical Remarks. (1) Critics claim this scene to be one of the most spectacular in the whole range of Shakespearean drama. (2) In its dramatic effect, this scene may be compared with the great sleep-walking scene. (3) The witches succeed in creating false confidence in Macbeth's heart by their ambiguous statements—Macbeth is now on his way to ultimate ruin. (4) An elaborate ritual of witchcraft has been introduced by Shakespeare in this scene—it creates an atmosphere of foreboding and sespense. (5) The re-appearance of the withes has been planned so as to create a thrill among the audience—the Shakespearean audience were superstitious and were impressed by the supernatural.

ACT IV—SCENE II

Slaughter of Macduff's family. As the curtain rises, Lady Macduff appears highly displeased at her husband's sudden flight to England. She cannot understand the reason why Macduff left her and the children unprotected. Ross tries to convince Lady Macduff by arguing that her husband's decision was based on wisdom. Although her husband is not a traitor, but his sudden and mysterious flight will throw a cloud of suspicion over him. In course of his talk Ross does not make any more disclosures and keeps many facts secret. He is, however, much affected by the distress of Lady Macduff and cannot bear it any longer. So he hurriedly takes leave of her and departs. Lady Macduff begins talking with her little son. Suddenly a messenger comes and warns her to fly at once because there is great danger at hand. He tells her that murderers whom Macbeth has set upon her family are close by. The messenger tells her that those murderers were enquiring about Macduff and his family. Lady Macduff is shocked to learn that and even before she has time to escape, the hired ruffians burst into the castle and slaughter the family.

Critical Remarks. (1) This scene marks further deterioration in Macbeth's character—the wholesale slaughter of Macduff's family is an ample proof of it mainlv because it is purposeless. (2) Now we are sure that Macbeth is marching towards his ultimate ruin and retribution. (3) The scene suggests that Macduff is to play the role of an avenger in future. (4) There is a deep pathos in this scene. (5) It reveals the unique methods employed by Shakespeare—he skilfully indicates the awful result of such pathos. (6) Judged as a whole, the scene is a dreadful one.

ACT IV—SCENE III

England. This scene takes us to England. Malcolm who is already trying to invade Scotland with the help of an English army, is joined by Macduff. As the scene opens, the lords who have been oppressed by the tyranny of Macbeth report to him the sufferings of the country. They tell Malcolm how evil and tyranny reigns supreme in Scotland. The talk indicates that Malcolm is on his guard. He suspects such messengers to be the agents of Macbeth, the usurper. Even Macduff's patriotic designs are chilled by his attitude. He is, however, anxious to relieve Scotland from the clutches of the tyrant. Macduff tries to assure Malcolm that he is not treacherous, but the latter is unable to reconcile himself due to his over-caution. He cannot understand why Macduff left his wife and children in Scotland at the mercy of his enemies. At last, however, Malcolm is assured of the sincerity and honesty of Macduff. He then welcomes him warmly and enthusiastically and tells him of his determination to liberate Scotland from the usurper's tyranny. The company is then joined by Ross who gives Macolm further information regarding the state of affairs in Scotland. Macduff asks some questions about his family and when he presses Ross too much, he discloses that Macduff's family has been slaughtered and his property confiscated. Macduff is overtaken with deep grief and determines to take revenge.

Critical Remarks. (1) There is not much movement in this scene but it is neither altogether static because it indicates the further development of the plot to a certain extent. (2) Critics describe this scene to be as a pause before the coming storm. (3) The development of events shows that revenge has to begin—if it had begun suddenly and abruptly, it might have been undramatic. Shakespeare keeps its paces slow. (4) The downfall of Macbeth must follow gradually—the storm clouds require time to gather. This scene produces time-illusion in an artistic manner. (6) From the dramatic point of view, the unusual length of his scene may be justified as a positive merit because it heightens the effcet of the counter-stroke which is to follow. (7) The dialogue is, however, dull and forced, and Malcolm's device appears to be not much worthwhile.

ACT V—SCENE I

The Doctor. This scene brings us again to Dunsinane castle in Scotland. It is for the last time that Lady Macbeth appears before us. The lady attendant of the queen reports to the doctor about the fits of somnambulance from which Lady Macbeth is suffering. The doctor kept a close eye over the patient for two nights but the queen had no fits during that time. Now the doctor asks the maid to tell him what the queen had said in her last sleep-walking fit. The maid is reluctant to tell because she is afraid that her statement will stand uncorroborated and she will be charged for giving false information.

Sleep-walking Fit. While this talk between the doctor and the gentle-woman about the condition of the disease of the queen is going on, Lady Macbeth appears with a taper in her hand. Her eyes are wide open but she is evidently fast asleep. In the course of walking in her sleep she continues to talk to herself. She speaks of the wife of the Thane of Fife, of blood, of the murders of Duncan and Banquo, and of other attending circumstances of the recent past. Sometimes she rubs her hands as if she is trying to wipe away the stains of blood from them. The doctor suspects something very deep as a real cause of

the ailment. Keeping her agitated manner and disconnected utterances as well as her conduct in view, he declares that she cannot be possibly cured through medical skill. Lady Macbeth sometimes keeps quiet and sometimes begins to burst into cries. In her fit she asks her husband to shake off his fear now that Banquo is dead and buried. Suddenly she behaves as if she has heard a knocking at the gate. Instantly she begins to persuade her husband in her imagination to act on her advice. Then she goes to bed. The doctor examines all this behavior minutely and remarks that the ailment can be cured by a priest and not by a doctor. While departing the doctor advises the gentle-woman to be careful to see that Lady Macbeth does not injure herself in her fit.

Critical Remarks. (1) This scene opens with the sleep-walking fit from which Lady Macbeth is suffering. (2) Her malady is at once somnambulism and lunacy. (3) It is marked by what has been described as 'subdued whispered horror.' (4) The sleep-walking scene is unique. (5) Retribution has begun to work on Lady Macbeth's soul. (6) The utterances of Lady Macbeth in her sleep-walking fit are indicative of her inner horror and anguish rising from the memory of past deeds. (7) The point whether deep grief, melancholy and remorse do exhibit themselves on somnambulism has been much discussed and challenged. But we need not waste our energies in litigation on this point. (8) What we must remember is that the scene is sublimely beautiful and (9) It is the product of the stroke of Shakespeare's creative powers of imagination. (10) Lady Macbeth's utterances have a ring of highest poetry. (11) The prose is highly suitable to the utterances of an ailing person—it is broken where the sleep-walking fit begins. (12) This scene indicates clearly that the bloody deeds have snatched away the peace of mind of Lady Macbeth and that her end has come.

ACT V—SCENE II

March of Malcolm's Forces. Macbeth's tyrannical rule alienates the hearts of all and the Scottish lords with

their followers join Malcolm's invading forces as they march upon Dunsinane Castle where Macbeth has fortified himself. Rumours are at large about Macbeth. Some say that he has gone mad while others take him to be stirred with fury. One fact is, however, clear that the lords and nobles continue to desert him slowly. As his bloody deeds are tormenting his soul, there is an intense conflict in his mind.

Critical Remarks. (1) This scene indicates that the final doom in approaching very fast—the action moves very rapidly. (2) Lady Macbeth has now disappeared from the stage altogether. (3) Macbeth being deserted by supporters finds himself alone—he is now facing his final destiny. (4) This scene shows also the power and popularity of Malcolm and the progress of the patriotic movement which is heading towards the liberation of the country and restoration of kingship to the rightful ruler.

ACT V—Scene III

Macbeth Over-confident. Macbeth learns that the invading force is daily increasing in strength and that his followers who are gradually deserting him are joining the oncoming forces day by day. He does not, however, feel any great anxiety at this because, according to the prediction of the witches, he cannot be shaken from his position so along as Birnam wood does not move to Dunsinane castle. He deems it to be impossible. The witches had also prophesied that no man born of woman could kill him. In that case, there is no reason that Macbeth should worry. In his over-confidence he does not care for the desertion of his followers and the multiplication of the strength of the enemy forces. Macbeth is informed that ten thousand English soldiers are on the march against him. At this news Macbeth remarks that he is sick at heart and feels weary of life. He does never expect to enjoy honour, love and obedience in his life. He feels sad and thinks that his fate is going to be decided once for all in this struggle.

Lady Macbeth Incurable. While Macbeth is about to put on his armour, the doctor reports to him of the condition of Lady Macbeth about whom he says that her malady is incurable. Macbeth sometimes orders his servant to remove the armour and at other times orders him to put it on again. It is but on account of the prediction of the witches that he regains his confidence. The doctor continues to watch the conditian of Macbeth's mental turmoils and then walks off the stage saying to himself that if he gets a chance of flying away from Dunsinane he will never come back again at any cost.

Critical Remarks. (1) This scene provides us an opportunity of contrasting the cool determination of Macbeth's enemy and the mental conflict from which he is himself suffering. (2) Macbeth's irresolution is proved also from the nature of the language he speaks—sometimes he becomes violent and at other times moralises like a philosopher. (3) It seems as if he is being tossed from hope to fear and from fear to hope. (4) The doctor's attitude is a representative one—all the followers of Macbeth have the same feelings.

ACT V—SCENE IV

Birnam Wood Moves. When Malcolm with his army reaches Birnam wood, he orders his soldiers to cut the branches of the trees and carry them so as to cover themselves. The reason is that the scouts of the enemy may not be able to estimate the numerical strength of the invading forces. When Malcolm receives the news that Macbeth has shut himself up in his castle and he expresses his hope that the usurper's followers must be continuing to desert him and that those who remain under his banner do so only for the sake of discipline and not loyalty. Macduff, who is more practical, advises that the possibilities of the issue should be reserved for discussion after the end of the battle.

Critical Remarks. (1) In this scene, the catastrophe begins. (2) Birnam wood is beginning to move and the predictions of the witches proving to be true.

(3) Macbeth has been betrayed and deserted by his followers. (4) He waits in over-confidence for the last struggle.

ACT V—SCENE V

The Defences. Macbeth is seen busy in preparing a strong defence of the castle. He orders his followers to fly his banner on the outer walls of the castle. In his over-confidence he is sure that his defences will prove to be too strong for the enemy and that the invading forces will be ultimately destroyed.

Lady Macbeth's Death. While Macbeth is busy in strengthening the defences of the castle, he suddenly hears a loud shriek. On enquiry he learns that Lady Macbeth is dead. Macbeth receives the news very calmly. He makes some deep philosophical remarks about life. He feels that life drags on from day to day to its inevitable end. Suddenly a messenger appears and reports that Birnam wood is moving towards Dunsinane castle. Macbeth is for the first time bitterly shocked. He, however, relies on the second prophecy of the witches that 'no person born of woman could harm him' and resolves to fight to the last.

Critical Remarks. (1) This scene contains Macbeth's most important remarks about life—his philosophic comment on life begins when he receives the news of his wife's death. (2) His remarks show that he is extremely weary of life which drags on from one day to another to its ultimate end, that is, ruin. Experience has shown him that life is "a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing." (3) Darkness surrounds Macbeth—the centre of his affection was his wife and now she is dead. This shatters his heart.

ACT V—SCENE VI

Attack. The soldiers of the attacking army, while approaching a field, throw down the boughs from their hands and begin to assault the castle. The full number.

of the forces is now revealed. Malcolm orders that Siward and his son should lead the first division and declares that he himself and Macduff will control the rest of the army.

Critical Remarks. (1) This scene throws ample light on Malcolm's character who had been hitherto absent from our eyes. (2) We find him every inch a king. (3) He is highly self-confident. (4) In our estimation he now stands high.

ACT V—SCENE VII

The Battle. In the battle that commences, Siward's son challenges Macbeth. Macbeth fights desperately and ultimately kills him. He then boasts and laughs. Macduff is in search of Macbeth. He is anxious to take revenge for the slaughter of his family. Suddenly he hears a great noise and moves towards the spot. He finds that Malcolm's forces have captured the castle.

Critical Remarks. (1) We find that Macbeth is still over-confident—he relies on the last prediction of the witches. (2) The fall of youthful Siward makes Macbeth boast. (3) He appears like a gambler who has put everything at stake.

ACT V—SCENE VIII

Macduff Fights Macbeth. Macbeth is left alone. He is absorbed in thought when Macduff comes and throws a challenge to him to fight. Macbeth tells him that no person born of woman would be able to injure him. Macduff thereupon informs him that he is not born of woman because he was ripped from his mother's womb. Macbeth is not ready to fight him but Macduff presses him to fight and ultimately slays him. Malcolm is proclaimed King of Scotland.

Critical Remarks. (1) In this scene restoration of the rightful king has been accomplished. (2) Macbeth is now remorseful in the real sense. (3) He cannot be adjudged a coward—he has enough physical courage and boldness

to face death. (4) He has in reality moral cowardice. (5) He cannot bear to stand the humiliations of being a prisoner in the hands of Malcolm. (6) He prefers to die fighting rather than to commit suicide. (7) In this scene he appears to be a man of great possibilities brought to ruin by his own frailty, that is, ambition. (8) We feel some amount of sympathy for him—this sympathy is imperceptible.

EVOLUTION OF ACTION IN MACBETH

Having studied the plot of *Macbeth* from various angles we now concentrate our attention on the study of its evolution. We know that in the early period of Shakespeare's dramatic career his plot is invariably far behind his characterisation. According to Professor Saintsbury, Moulton and others, Shakespeare had not yet acquired the art of constructing his plots up to the level of his characters. These critics rightly point out that Shakespeare was not the best plotter at this stage. They agree that so far as the characters are concerned he had attained quite early as much perfection as a dramatic artist as he had in the field of poetry. Shakespeare's grip over dramatic art becomes more firm in the second period when construction and dramatic conception touched higher artistic levels in his plays. By the time he came to the period when he set himself to produce great tragedies we find his plot and characters going hand in hand together. At this stage we come across high artistic harmony and symmetry in his plays. The plot in *Macbeth* is unique in many aspects. It is most clear, most coherent, most connected and most harmonious, of all his plots. He has worked the outline of the play with great care and caution. Similarly remarkable is the exposition. It is most brief and most lucid.

1. Two Parts. From the point of view of evolution, *Macbeth* may be devided into two parts. The first is that which deals with Macbeth's rise—spreading over his early victory, temptation, deed and the culmination of his ambition into success. The second part deals with his

ruin and destruction. It includes the murder of Banquo, the slaughter of the family of Macduff, the battle of Dunsinane; and the death of Macbeth.

2. **Rise**. The action rises swiftly through the initial stages. Its swiftness continues to gather speed in the cause of the development of the plot. Every new incident has an upward thrust. It lifts Macbeth up to the culmination of his success. Right from his victory against the rebel up to the murder of Banquo the action continues to rapidly move to a pitch. Then comes the crisis.

3. **Crisis**. The upward motion in *Macbeth* does not stop with the murder of Duncan and the usurpation of the throne. It continues swiftly, till the crisis is reached with Banquo's murder. Action moves on like that till the crisis is reached in the middle of Act III.

4. **Fall**. Just after the crisis, a series of disappointments and failures begins. The first disastrous accident is the escape of Fleance from the hands of the bloody murderers. Macbeth plans the slaughter of Macduff's family with a view to remove a severe obstacle from his way but this incident too weakens his position because Macduff becomes more active against him. In his frustration he goes to the witches to seek their consultation. They only create in him a false sense of security. His sense of over-confidence turns into disillusionment afterwards when Birnam wood actually moves to Dunsinane. This disillusionment deepens further when the fact that Macduff is not woman-born is disclosed. Then comes the final stage. It is now that the 'deed is returned upon the doer' and the tables are turned into complete ruin of Macbeth.

5. **Remarkable**. In its evolution *Macbeth* is thus unique. According to critics, the evolution of action in this play is remarkable due to its symmetry. The plot unfolds itself in such a way that the rise and fall of Macbeth constitutes, so to speak, "an arch of a bridge with its keystone in the centre."

6. Exposition. We may do better to trace the movement of action more minutely. It is clear that the first Act serves the function of exposition. It deals with the victories and temptations of Macbeth. We know that the first scene opens on a deserted heath under stormy weather. Three witches have assembled there to meet Macbeth, the thane of Glamis, later when he is to return from the battlefield. The moment comes. While marching back homeward Macbeth and Banquo are confronted by the witches in the desert.

7. Conflict. The witches speak of their future. At their predictions Macbeth starts visibly. Banquo is only surprised. Then comes Ross. At his arrival one prediction, at least, that Macbeth will become the Thane of Cawdor, is actually confirmed. The seed of temptation, so to speak, takes its root firmly. The soil is quite congenial for its sprouting. By the time we come to scene four some important developments have taken place. It is in this scene that Macbeth sees the major obstacles rising before him. To his disappointment the king settles his succession upon his eldest son Malcolm and awards him the title of the Prince of Cumberland. This incident is too much. Some critics describe it as 'fanning of the fire of desire' in the ambitious heart of Macbeth. The plant of temptation begins to grow. It receives necessary care from Lady Macbeth in the first scene where she applies her womanly tact to incite him into activity. She prepares him to make the best of the opportunity provided by a golden chance. It is her incitement which stirs Macbeth to try his best to accomplish his ambition. When we come to the close of the seventh scene in the first Act, we find that the temptation has become complete in every respect. By this time Macbeth has overcome all obstacles and has set aside every moral scruple barring his progress. Now there in only one ideal before him and that is the realisation of his ambition. Then we come to the actual deed of Duncan's murder itself. This deed in done after a great deal of hesitation, and a tremendous conflict between good and evil currents in Macbeth's soul. There is a struggle between the iron will of Lady Macbeth and the weaker nature of

her husband. The actual murder of Duncan is committed in the second scene of the second Act. A change comes over Macbeth. After the crime, he is almost distracted with horror. Lady Macbeth keeps up her nerves and goes to the scene of tragedy to place the daggers there. The next important scene is that which may be called the 'Porter Scene.' It performs the function of affording necessary relief and diversion after the terrible rush of tragic events. The latter part of the scene is taken up with the discovery of the murder. We mark Macbeth and his lady acting their allotted part very well. The lords disperse promising to meet at a later stage to inquire and investigate into the crime of murder. Malcolm, who understands the situation in a moment, flies away from Scotland. The third scene provides the picturesque and appropriate ground necessary for the bloody crime. The talk between Ross and the old man reveals how there is disturbance in nature. It implies that supernatural powers were all the time active.

8. **Climax**. In this manner *Macbeth* continues to grow till we come to the middle of the third Act. We find the hero sinking deeper and deeper in crime and mark a steady decline in his character. He grows suspicions of his nobles, particularly Banquo, and hatches a plot to remove Banquo and his son Fleance from his way. Thus, one crime leads him on to another till he attains a visible success.

9. **Decline.** The escape of Fleance, however, spoils the whole show. In the Banquet Scene, Banquo's ghost appears. It drives Macbeth to a nervous breakdown. He is overtaken by sanity and madness by turns. It is only the tact of his lady that saves him from suspicion.

The witches and their goddess Hecate appear in the fifth scene again. They perform some mysterious rites of a magical nature. This develops further the atmosphere of gloom, desolation and dread which dominates the whole play. In the last scene of this Act, we perceive how steadily Macbeth loses ground and how suspicions are aroused against him. The counter-forces are now in

motion with greater speed. The threat of doom is quite near.

10. Catastrophe. Macbeth's steady downfall and decline is again dealt with in the fourth and fifth Acts. He confers with the witches. They create in him over-confidence. It is just after that incident that he plunges into despair and disappointment. When the forces crowd round him he fortifies himself up till the last moment in the castle and continues to blindly rely upon the promises held out by the witches about his invincibility. He takes the news of Lady Macbeth's death with apparent calmness. His interest in life has, however, ceased. He does not feel any fascination in even the throne and crown ; and dies in a spirit of fatalism.

11. Nemesis. Shakespeare has thus managed the plot admirably. The first part deals with the rise and the second with the fall of Macbeth. Some critics are of the opinion that even if the two halves of the play are taken separately the same progression and arrangement may be discovered. There is the same artistic balance and rise and fall traceable even in that case. We can trace the crime and punishment as well. According to Professor Moulton even "if its two halves be taken separately, they will be found to constitute Nemesis complete in itself."

12. The First Half. The rise of Macbeth does not cease with his partial success. It reveals his former crimes. The bloody deed brings his punishment in the form of mental agonies and Banquo's ghost. All his previous crimes stand unmasked at this stage. So in Moulton's words "the first half of the play, that which traces the rise of Macbeth, is a complete Nemesis action—a career of sins in which the last sin secures the punishment of all."

13. The Second Half. In the second half of the play, we come across the attempt on Macduff's life and the slaughter of his family. These incidents bring in their wake the inevitable punishment. When Macduff finally

cuts short Macbeth's life he is not only saving Scotland from the clutches of the tyrant but is also having his own revenge. In this manner Banquo and Macduff balance each other in the plot. Macduff's role in the first half of the play is similar to that of Banquo in the second half, and thus the contention that 'There is an artistic balance in the rise and fall of action, even if the two halves of the play are taken separately,' seems to have much stock of reason behind it.

14. Three Forms of Action. Various critics, like Moulton and his followers, find in Macbeth three forms of action racing along side by side from beginning to end of the plot. *First*, as we have seen, there is Nemesis in the career of Macbeth. In Professor Moulton's opinion, the rise of the action is a crime of which the fall is the retribution. *Secondly*, there is what Moulton is pleased to call an oracular action in the plot of *Macbeth*. He argues that the Oraculars of the witches and their fulfilment in the very first part of the play is a very marked and important element. The prediction of the witches that Macbeth will become king is fulfilled in the first part. Again, the fulfilment of Oracular action may be traced in the fall of Macbeth as well. The evidence is that according to supernatural predictions Macbeth is to fall only when Birnam wood moves to Dunsinane, and Birnam wood does actually move in the second half of the play. Then, again, it has been predicted by the witches that Macbeth shall not be killed by any man born of woman. Now, Macduff turns out to be such a person—he was ripped from his mother's womb before the completion of the gestation period. *Thirdly*, there is the ironic action. It runs side by side with the above two elements. We know that the witches promise to crown Macbeth in the early part of the play. A series of obstacles rise to bar his progress, but all such hurdles are leaped over by him. It will be correct to maintain that what apparently appear to be obstacles in the beginning go a long way to establish him more securely on the throne. We might remember that the apparition also promised security to Macbeth. It was, however, not an absolute one. There was a drawback attached to

it. The apparition had warned him to beware of Macduff, and in the end it is Macduff who brings Macbeth's life to an end. The whole of Macbeth's career appears to be animated by the same spirit of irony. To quote an example, the witches predict for Banquo a status which is to be lesser than Macbeth, and yet greater than his. This creates a temptation in Macbeth's heart to remove Banquo from his way. In so doing, all the crimes which he had committed so far are automatically unmasked.

15. Brevity and Simplicity of Plot. Of all the plays of Shakespeare, except the *Comedy of Errors*, *Macbeth* is the shortest. This brevity is mostly due to the simplicity of its plot. Both of these characteristics, that is to say, brevity and simplicity, may be traced to Shakespeare's credit. He may be praised for his skilful workmanship as a result of which he is able to produce the impression he had aimed at with unique simplicity and economy.

16. Sympathy. Shakespeare had to encounter very difficult dramatic problems while writing *Macbeth*. He had to build up the character of his hero in a peculiar way; Macbeth has to play the role of a cold-blooded murderer marching through his crimes to realise his ambitions. He is required to murder the innocent king in order to seize the crown. Then, again, he has to ruthlessly and treacherously remove a friend and co-general in the battlefield just in order to secure the crown for his own self. Futhermore, he has to satisfy his anger and malice by getting a whole family savagely slaughtered and cut to pieces. In all these circumstances, it was very difficult for Shakespeare to enlist our sympathies for the character of Macbeth. Macbeth is a villain and he has to be presented as a hero of a tragedy, the merit of which lies in raising our sense of sympathy and pity at the end. Such a sympathy is demanded by all the rules of drama. A tragic hero may miss everything else but he must engage our sympathy at all costs. Now Shakespeare seems to try all the conventional devices in order to provoke the sympathies of his audience towards his hero, Macbeth.

He tries to present him as a brave general, 'valour's minion' and 'Bellona's bridegroom.' The offences of Macbeth cannot be lessened anyhow. Again, Shakespeare lays repeated stress on Macbeth's deep devotion to Lady Macbeth. This device also fails to rouse our sympathies for Macbeth. The ground created for our sympathy on the basis of closer attachment and deep devotional love proves unfertile for our pity. Being a murderer after all, this tragic hero of Shakespeare fails to stir our sympathy. We take him to be selfish because he commits crimes for his private profit. His character does not appeal to us and Shakespeare has failed to make us throw open the flood-gates of sympathy for a villain set up as a hero. Why has Shakespeare failed? He has failed because he does not allow even a single soft spot where we may pardon his villain. In place of minimising the crimes of his hero, Shakespeare doubles and triples them consciously or unconsciously. We are free to appreciate or condemn this device, but one claim may be made in all circumstances, and it is that Shakespeare has got ample audacity to make his hero plunge deeper and deeper into crime.

17. Hallucination. The remarks made by Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch throw ample light on the artistic device through which Shakespeare had been able, to a certain extent, to arouse the sympathies of his audience. How did he make them look at the hideous crimes of Macbeth leniently? Sir Arthur says, "There is only one possible way. It is to make our hero—supposed great, supposed brave, supposed of certain winning natural gifts—proceed to his crime under some fatal hallucination. It must not be an hallucination of mere madness: for it merely revolts." "Further," says he, "such an hallucination once established upon a strong mind, the more forcibly that mind reasons the more desperate will be the conclusion of its error; the more powerful is the will, or combination of wills, the more irreparable will be the deed to which it drives, as with the anguish we shall follow the once-noble soul step by step to its ruin." We may conclude that among the unsuccessful devices of arousing pity, this device is less unsuccessful.

18. The Witch Scene. The witch scene may be said to be one of the striking features of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*. Among the critics of Shakespeare there is a majority who have tried to belittle his device of introducing the supernatural element in the tragedy of *Macbeth*. It seems that his mind was seized by the suggestion of witches in Holinshed's Chronicle to which he was indebted. Once impressed by it, he attempts to thrust it in *Macbeth*. He does so in such a manner that the play assumes the nature of a drama of crime. The supernatural forces have deep connection with the play. They are not merely superfluous ornaments in the plot. Some of Shakespeare's contemporary dramatists introduced witches for the sake of entertainment. It was because the Elizabethan peoplewere moved to wonder and awe through the introduction of the supernatural. So far as *Macbeth* is concerned, it is not for the sake of entertainment that the witches appear in the plot. They have a definite role to play therein. They, for example, heighten the atmosphere of gloom which is needed for a tragedy. The very first scene in *Macbeth* is a supernatural one and may be said to be the keynote of action. As soon as the filthy bearded hags, as the witches are, appear before us, our thought is naturally diverted to desolation, death and disaster. The witches, therefore, in the first instance pepare us for the crimes which have to be committed in the course of the action. So the witch scenes are interlinked and interwoven into the texture of the plot and serve the purpose of heightening artistic harmony in the play.

19. Structure. Thus, movement or evolution in this play has been brought about through various devices—through introducing the supernatural, irony, conflict, passion, etc.—all weaved into the structure of *Macbeth*. Shakespeare has exposed the theme of the play artistically.In the course of the exposition all that we need to know about the situation in which Macbeth and other characters find them selves involved, has been told interestingly with perfect ease. The opening scenes of *Macbeth* are just in the nature of an introduction to the conflict which constitutes the substance of the plot. After the exposition a strong desire—*ambition*—is awakened in the mind of Macbeth. It is the

result of his peculiar character and the special circumstances in which he is placed. To accomplish his purpose he makes strenuous efforts and this struggle, with its outcome, makes up the play. The initial step in *Macbeth* is the first important turning point. It has been presented with distinctness. The conflict then begins—the central struggle is between two forces, good and evil. The stage of complication comes as soon as this struggle begins to set clearly towards the definite outcome—the accomplishment of Macbeth's ambition. The stage of 'resolution' may be traced right from the climax down to the conclusion. The end of *Macbeth* settles all strife. Thus, the course of action swings round from increasing complication towards increasing simplification. These divisions of action sometimes overlap one another. According to Tolman, Shakespeare skilfully prepares us for every important development that is to come. It is specially true of *Macbeth* that the characters and circumstances in this play have been put before us early so as to indicate what the outcome is to be. It is after this that the mighty masterpiece moves steadily on to its inevitable end—disaster, ruin and devastation.

20. **Passion.** Movement of plot or evolution of action is brought about through various devices, particularly that of *passion* as it has been done in *Macbeth*. Character and plot combined with passion form those well-known elements which are necessary for dramatic effect. As the study of *Macbeth* reveals, passion depends on the character—that of Macbeth. Sympathy of the reader or spectator follows the characters through the incidents of the plot. Movement follows the actual order of the events which produce emotional effects and passion develops through the progress of action. As we have seen already the plan of construction is the same in the Passion Movement as that in the plot itself. Thus the movement of passion follows the form of a regular arch in *Macbeth*. It commences in calmness, rises through emotional strain to a summit of agitation at the centre, then through the rest of the play it declines into calmness of a different kind. Macbeth's initial calmness, before his meeting, and his

last calmness (when he hears the death news of his lady and surrenders himself down) illustrates this point quite clearly.

21. Gist. The above discussion may be summed up in a few words. We may conclude that the action of the play is *compact*, and that in spite of the fact that events rush *swiftly*, there is nothing, however, disjointed or disconnected to snatch away the *artistic harmony* of *Macbeth*. It is *well balanced* in every respect and to such an extent that even if, instead of judging it as a whole, we set ourselves to analyse it in separate halves we will find the same trend of evolution and balance in action as in the compact whole body of the play. The supernatural element, particularly the witches, whose importance may be neglected easily, are *not merely superfluous ornaments*. They are interlinked with the plot of the play in such a way that everything done by them contributes a lot to the atmosphere. It may be claimed that there is no tiny detail or even minor character in *Macbeth* to fall off in the course of the action, which moves on to its end in a logical and systematic manner. The play leaves the final impression of harmony and clearness behind it. The evolution of the action has nearest resemblance to the development of the classical tragedies. Three forms of action, (1) Nemesis, (2) Oracular, and (3) Irony, run side by side in the plot. Passion plays the dominating role. They are perfectly harmonized and complete in all technical details. The action passess through all these and ultimately ends in disaster. It moves through the atmosphere of gloom and enchantment. The witches weave important threads in the plot and serve as agents of Nemesis. They work by means of ironical oracles. Keeping these along with many other qualities in view it may be safely claimed that *Macbeth* is a work of art and a fine piece of workmanship. It moves in leaps and bounds with great rushing speed and yet with perfect harmony.

A REVIEW OF MACBETH

Macbeth is a *work of art* of *admitted excellence*. It is a *piece of fine workmanship*. Among Shakespeare's

tragedies, it stands eminent because it is (1) '*Complete in itself*,' (2) '*Strongly imagined*,' *simply constructed* and (3) In its way '*excellent beyond any challenging*.' It is an unchallengeable *masterpiece* in many of its aspects which will be discussed later in fuller detail. For the present some *broad facts* have, however, to be grasped. We should remember that in its impression *Macbeth* is an eminently *effective play*, for as Quiller-Couch remarks, "*It produces a great, and intended impression on the mind.*" It is so *short* among Shakespeare's plays that it exhausts itself in just under 2000 lines. Thus, it is 'scarcely more than half the length of *Hamlet*.' This *brevity* may be attributed to its *simplicity of plot*, and should be taken as one of its bright qualities. Shakespeare's skill lies in his *artistry*, *simplicity* and *economy*. He knows that to give '*one stroke*' is '*better than two*.' *Macbeth*, says Quiller-Couch, "had to be an *acting play*" and this "differentiates it at once from a literary composition meant to be read by the fire-side, where the kettle does all the hissing." So we are required to *feel* in order to realize its *unique power*. In its versification, characterisation, and various poetic and dramatic beauties it is one of the few matchless masterpieces available in literature.

1. Appeal. *Macbeth* is *unique* among Shakespeare's tragedies as being (*a*) *wholly supernatural* and (*b*) *wholly emotional*. Thus, though *Othello* and *King Lear* are emotional they are not wholly supernatural but 'entirely human.' The same claim may be made about *Antony and Cleopatra*. In *Hamlet* and *Julius Caesar* we come across ghosts, no doubt, but in spite of that these two tragedies cannot be claimed as wholly supernatural, because "We are in no way conscious of the *continual pressure of supernatural* agencies" as in *Macbeth* which *unfolds* itself with supernatural scene, lays *much emphasis on predictions* and *ends with their fulfilment*. *Macbeth*, unlike *Hamlet* which is deliberate, intellectual, slow-moving and thoughtful, is *emotional*, *swift*, *violent and passionate tragedy*. Being *short and at the same time sweeping*, it makes the impression of *rapidity* more than that of *brevity*.

2. Imagination. The power of *Macbeth* may be realized only through increasingly *sustained efforts of imagination.* In order to enjoy the full significance of its poetry and countless tiny details expanding themselves through the atmosphere of *violence and blood* under an *indirect influence of mysterious powers* acting from *uncontrollable* quarters, we need a stretch of imagination more than that required to appreciate ordinary tragedies in which much is explained than left for thought and imgination.

3. Grimmest. John Drinkwater, in his famous 'Outline of Literature', gives very valuable criticism of *Macbeth.* "Much has been said about it," says he, "it has been named, though not conclusively, as *the greatest of the tragedies.*" He remarks further, "If it is not the greatest, it certainly is the *grimmest* ; the most *un-relenting* in its *show of evil.*" The *tunes* and *harmonies* employed by Shakespeare show how complete was the *mastery* over words that he possessed. In the words of the critic, "It is a *magic use of words* indeed."

4. Middleton's Interpolations. "The text of *Macbeth,*" says the critic, is in itself a difficulty. "Our sole authority for it is the First Folio and there it is *worst printed* than most of the plays. But besides this it is practically certain that whole scenes in it are *not Shakespeare's at all. No responsible opinion holds that he wrote Hecate : it is quite likely that the work does not begin till Macbeth enters with*

'So foul and fair a day I have not seen.'

The play's *unrelieved gloom*, it would appear, lessened its popularity and *Middleton* probably—a good enough dramatist in his way—was brought in to liven it up with a *few* songs and dances. We must remember that in those days a play was as much the *property of the theatre* that produced it as were the clothes it was performed in. Middleton did more than he was called for doubtless. *He may have tagged a speech or two with a more cheery couplet.* But it is *in the last degree unlikely* that Shakes-

peare opened the play with Macbeth's appearance : *the material of the proceeding is probably Shakespeare's*, though it is *mauled* almost past recognition."

5. **Compliment to James I.** Continuing further, the critic says, "It seems certain that the play was *written with an eye to the special approbation of James I.* This is betokened by the *Scottish story* of the *witches*, but more specially by the *reference to Banquo's royal decendants* and the speech about *touching the King's evil.* And this has an importance apart from its interest to the students. When James came to England, one of the things, it would appear, that the English courtiers were proudest to show him was the English drama, and he was not slow to patronize it. Kings and queens did not go to the theatres in those days. But in the winter of 1604-5, no fewer than *seven* of Shakespeare's plays were given at White Hall and *Othello*, *Macbeth* and *King Lear* took their places with the comedies as an entertainment that a King and his court might be expected to enjoy."

6. **Scenes of Two Murders—Terrific.** The critic remarks, "The greatest of Shakespeare's plays this may *not* be. But he wrote *nothing more terrific*—in the true sense of the word—*than the two scenes containing Duncan's murder and Banquo's.*" The critic says, "Read and feel and then again think over and picture and feel and read and see if you can exhaust the *tragic effect* of them. It will exhaust you soon." Proceeding further, he remarks : "Macbeth is indeed the tragedy of *unchecked will destroying itself*, as *Hamlet* is the tragedy of unready will wasting itself."

7. **Lady Macbeth.** "The first section of the two is the easier to picture," remarks Drinkwater. "It is all the more explicit. The salient thing, perhaps, about Lady Macbeth *who is its motive*—bear, even more than her *fixity of purpose*, is her *terrible clarity of vision.* She not only sees how the deed can be done, but she sees *each aspect of it in terms of such simplicity.* She has *a little doubt*, apparently, as to *whether her sex will not physically be unfit for this sort of thing* :

> '......*come to my woman's breasts*
> *And take my milk for gall, you murdering ministers*'.

is her apostrophe. But when she finds that the *wine* which muddles men's heads only *makes her clearer*, that she *can stand and listen quite coolly while Macbeth commits the murder*, that she has *made no mistake* in adding her own part, it is with a *dreadful*, almost with a *childish eagerness of daring* that she says :

> '.........*Had he not resembled my father as he slept*
> *I'd done't*..............'

and when Macbeth stands *broken*, body and spirit, for the moment by the harm of his deed, she turns on him *coolly* steadily, with :

> '.........*infirm of purpose!*
> *Give me the daggers. The sleeping and the dead*
> *Are but as pictures ; 'tis the eye of childhood*
> *That fears a painted devil. If he do bleed*
> *I will gild the faces of the grooms withal,*
> *That it must seem their guilt.*'

And she goes and does it *without a tremor*.

Macbeth is as *guilty at heart*, but *his mind backs and feels*—as a boat's sail with doubtful wind—with *misgivings* and *remorse*.

Her word is just :

> '*How easy is it, then !*'

8. King's Murder. "In all the *happiness of peace* after victory," continues the critic, "a victory that Macbeth has won for him—Duncan comes to the castle. The *calm beauty* of sunset *symbolises* for us the *happy confidence* in which he comes. He is greeted by his 'honoured hostess.' He kisses her, as the custom was (*one wonders if her cheek was cold*) and passes in with his little train. We must *imagine* the torches that crossed the courtyard, the lighted rooms that we glimpse, the music playing while the king sups. Later come the few words of goodnight to the troubled Banquo, then the stillness of

the sleeping house and the tinkling of the bell that calls Macbeth to his work *in the dark*. And while the short night passes, *two shadows of evil pass in and out of the court-yard*. The *knocking* on the gate begins and grows louder and louder till it rouses the *jovial porter* who cracks his jokes as he pulls on his clothes. The dawn comes."

9. **Crown**. We should note, says the critic, "*how Shakespeare brings in a new character and strikes a new note for the discovery of the murder*. Macduff has come to the castle with Duncan, but he has not spoken before. It is his voice—*the voice of a conscious-free, courageous man*—that rings out the news that leads to a chorus of amazement and horror. Mark too his *quick direct question* to Macbeth, when he hears that the blood-stained grooms have been killed. After this he falls almost *silent*, throws a word and a glace towards Lady Macbeth, who has fainted or pretends to. *We must see with steady eye on Macbeth* and a very sceptical ear for his verbose protestations. Still he is a *shrewd man*. He sees, as do Duncan's two sons, that Macbeth has the game in his hands. They are all *in his castle* and *in his power*. The king is past his help. *He beats his time and goes*. Banquo and Ross and Lennox make peace with their consciences. Malcolm and Donalbain escape. *Macbeth has won his crown*."

10. **Suggestive Dialogue**. "All this," says the critic, "has been *plain sailing enough*, but *in the next section we must look well behind the words*. We must hear the simple speech of Banquo :

'*Thou hast it now ; king, Cawdor, Glamis all*........'

the tone of the *kindly good man tempted by the benefit* of another's ill deeds. It is through the suggestive dialogue that we must see Macbeth, as king *weighted with splendour*, his very *speech pallid and hollow and cold*. We have to observe the *curious emptiness* of his lines to Banquo as he sends him to his death, and have to listen to the ominous beat in '*ride you this afternoon* ?' We have to observe, too, that Lady Macbeth, but for a *formal* greeting, stands silent and is *dismissed* with the

others. She goes *in dread*; evidently she leaves in dread, for she *can read her husband's thoughts*—who better?—but he *broods alone* and *tells her none of his doings*. She knows well enough that some *mischief* is afoot, but she *knows no more*. We must picture her, while the last part of this scene passes, waiting somewhere, *waiting for him to come*. In the second scene, we see she can endure it no more. She sends a servant to the king; Banquo is in her mind."

11. A Broken Woman. "But when he comes he is as *far from her* as ever," remarks the critic "and she as helpless to help him, she who has been the very *spirit* of his doings till now. She can utter only a platitude or two—tell him not to keep so much alone; to look more cheerful. When Banquo's name is spoken she *shrinks from the ill implication*, then forces herself to a question. *Macbeth treats her like a child*. He loves her, but he knows that she is but a *broken woman now*. Now how *little* of this is written in words; but how right it is dramatically that it *should be pictured*, but *left unsaid*."

12. Banquo's Murder. Next we should consider "the episode of Banquo's murder; *perfectly* done. The two murderers, with the third—to our surprise, as to their's—sent to *spy* on them. A *good stroke*, telling us *more* of Macbeth *than ten speeches* might do. The scene has been painted for us *in twenty words*:

> *The west yet glimmers with some streaks of day.*
> *Now spurs the lated traveller apace*
> *To gain the timely inn.*

Then Banquo's simple '*It will rain tonight*' and with a rough '*let it come down*,' they set on him. Fleance escapes; the light goes out; they stand in the *dark*, whispering a few detached words, the dead man at their feet."

13. Banquet. "We come to the banquet," says the critic. "It is a scene of some *splendour*, for Macbeth would make his court a well-liked place by such means as he could. He moves among his guests *forcibly*

jovial. At any moment the news that Banquo is dead may come. If it gets about, so much the better that they should all be *innocently* feasting. The Queen sits *aloof* on her chair of state. He will *not trust* her nerve now among the people, or she will not trust it, and she is *so weary* she can hardly hold up her head under the *heavy crown.* But she sees him go to the door, and he stays there too long talking, and his face begins to play him *tricks.* She knows the danger and rouses herself to recall him, *to distract* attention from his looks. He responds to her but much *too readily,* speaks of his absent comrade, and then—Banquo has not failed the feast he was bidden to. He has come quickly in and there he sits *blood boltered* in Macbeth's very chair." "Think of the effect," proposes the critic. "*No one else sees him.* Macbeth even does not see him till he goes to take his seat and the ghost turns his *blood-stained face*—it is *within a foot of* him—and stares at him with *sightless eyes.* There is *no scene like it.* Nor is it the *physical thing that strains at our nerves.* It is the *sight* of Macbeth, *racked with horror,* yet *not yielding an inch, not able,* as it were, to yield or to fly, for the *spectre is in his own brain*—how can he fly it. And his *wrecked* wife, *weak* and *worn* as she is, mustering all she can of her *old strength* to save him from discovery, *to save him from himself*—a ghastly, *heroic* effort. They are alone at last, among the flickering torches at the *disordered* table."

'*It will have blood. They say blood will have blood.*'

And he harps on the words and the thought.

'*The secretest man of blood,*
I am in blood stepped in so far,'

He is a murderer both *in heart and mind* now, and nothing but a murderer. He sees his path. She is *exhausted* and she has *lost* all power over him. She can only say dully :

'*You lack the season of all natures, sleep.*'

But he answers - but as if, cut free from all remorse, he could not command himself—*hardly, confidently, boldly* :

'Come, we'll sleep. My strength and self-abuse.
His the initiate fear that wants hard use :
We are yet but young in deed.'

14. Conclusion. Winding up his discussion the critic says, "The play moves to its end," to the *fading out of the shadows* that Lady Macbeth has become. She *killed* herself ; it could be indeed little doing. The *nemesis* of her *clarity of vision*, of her seeing things as they were—*a spot of blood is a spot of blood, no more*—nightly, in the sleep that should be some small salvation to her. She wanders, pitifully rubbing blood of Duncan from her hands in vain. And Macbeth, self-dammed, *cannot even weep* for her death, *shrugs* at the news and turns away. How do we first see him ? Coming from victory to be greeted by Duncan's generous gratitude. What is his end ? *The end of a beast tied to a stake and baited to death.*"

15. Mystery. Now *Macbeth* may be claimed to be a piece of *mystery* descending into *depth* and ascending into *immensity*. The supernatural note is *terrible*. The mysterious influence of *'sightless substances,'* the witches, is felt throughout to lead critics to claim that *Macbeth* is *not a realistic play* like *Othello*. *Macbeth* and his lady seem to be under the *constant hypnotic control* of evil powers working from mysterious spheres. Right from the exposition down to the point where Banquo's ghost enters into the banquet room the mysterious influences appear to be *highly intense*. Then they are *gradually* withdrawn into the background *"until we are left with cold reality."* We share and feel the mysterious *horror* with Macbeth. The *magnificent poetry* in *Macbeth* has lended it *sublimity*, *energy* and *intensity* to a high degree and we feel the presence of ever-active supernatural or evil powers through *minute suggestions* which prove Shakespeare's skill and require our imagination to a high degree.

16. Witch Drama. It is an obvious fact that the story of Macbeth in Holinshed's *Chronicles*, from which Shakespeare borrowed materials, is only a *story of treachery*

and intrigues. It is *common* enough to give dramatic inspiration. What appears to have impressed Shakespeare most is the incident of the *strange meeting* between Macbeth and the witches on the heath in stormy weather. The brief description of this meeting *captured Shakespeare's imagination* and he decided to produce a 'witch drama.' Such dramas were produced even before, but for Shakespeare it was a new field. After borrowing material which he thought proper and interesting, he set himself to *alter* the actual story. He changed it *considerably* and combined some new facts with an earlier story wherever he thought it fit and suitable for the dramatic purposes.

17. Hero—A Villain. A tragic hero must necessarily provoke our *sympathies* and Shakespeare's tragic method was to raise our sense of compassion and pity for his hero to the loftiest pitches, and then bring about his ruin. Now, so far as the *historical* Macbeth was concerned; it was only an *unattractive figure* from the dramatic point of view. History presents him as a treacherous and successful villain who usurped the throne and held it for seventeen years under severe tyranny. It was not possible for such a figure to catch our sympathies. What Shakespeare did was, firstly, that he *cut down his reign* to a month or two. Then he set himself to tackle various devices to enlist the sympathies of his audience. It, however, appears that instead of actually elevating his hero's virtue, he *multiplies his villainies* whereby he is made ten times worse than he actually was in the *Chronicles.* He made him a soldier, a host, murderer, a guest and in all capacities and as a whole, utterly a *despicable* and *hateful* figure. He is made by Shakespeare to murder Duncan, an old and defenceless guest. We know that the king has not at any time acted in an objectionable manner towards Macbeth. He treacherously assassinates him *without cause.* After presenting Macbeth as engaged in a terrible series of crimes, Shakespeare tries to arouse our *sympathy* for him *by the introduction of the supernatural element.* The suggestion is that Macbeth commits all the terrible crimes *at the instance of the evil powers* whose sole aim it was to *defeat the moral order* of things and to *play*

foul everywhere. Having once introduced the evil forces in the plot and having built an *atmosphere of darknsss*, Shakespeare tries to use all and every sort of artifice to enlist our sympathies with him, and it may be claimed without fear of contradiction that he has succeeded to a considerable extent in his object.

18. Blood and Darkness. One aspect of Macbeth is that its atmosphere is *not bright.* It is charged with *dark terror.* Shakespeare has cast the play in darkness. *This darkness is relieved only by fire.* Majority of scenes take place either at night or in dark corners. Even those which unfold in day time are not bright because a cover of the murkiness and fog of a Highland winter is thrown over them. Thus, critics are justified in claiming that *darkness broods over the whole tragedy of Macbeth.* The plot proceeds forward under *fear from unknown quarters.* The keynote of all terror running in the plot lies in its *mystery.* Every tiny detail is *suggestive.* Much is *vague* and *implied. Nothing is definite.* The *horror* inspired by the witches is not due to themselves or their deeds but due to the *terrible suggestion of the mysterious.* They are the *instruments* of evil due to which *strange* and *unnatural* happenings take place. Such *tricks of language* have been used by Shakespeare, which may *enchance the sense of terror.* He uses *wild* and *violent* language, *terrible* and *unnatural* metaphors all pointing towards the mysterious and supernatural. He used *violent imagery, artistry* and *antithesis* to enchance the effects of force and strength. His art lies in the fact that he does all this *without sacrificing the ultimate sublimity.* It has been correctly remarked by a critic that if a painting of the atmosphere of Macbeth is drawn, the *dominating colour would be that of darkness relieved only by the colour of blood.*

19. Common Device. The devices used by the dramatists of the time was to introduce the witches in order to create an impressive atmosphere of terror. Shakespeare also use the same device, but his witches are *unlike* those of all others. They are *unconventional.* It cannot however he said that Shakespeare has introduced any unfamiliar supernatural element in his plays. The fact is

that in spite of their distinct character these witches were *familiar* to the Elizabethan audience. In their nature these witches were not *spirits* but were on the other hand *old hags who had sold their souls to the devil and had exchanged fair* for *foul*. It is with these *uncanny* and *mysterious* things that Macbeth makes his *hellish* bargain. A question has often been raised that if the influence of the supernatural is taken to be *active*, then how far may the witches be held *responsible* for the crimes of Macbeth. The answer is that Macbeth was *obviously guilty even before he met them*. The predictions of the witches are nothing but the *echoes of Macbeth's own thoughts*. Banquo who was also present at the time of the predictions remained *unmoved* while Macbeth was *obviously thrilled and startled*. It proves that while Banquo looked at the witches *innocently*, Macbeth *did not*. The ambition *lay asleep* in Macbeth's own heart. It is only *stirred by the supernatural*. Macbeth, too, supposes himself to be guilty and does never curse the supernatural because he is *conscious of his own frailty*.

Essence. There are, thus, *two points* which give the whole essence of the atmosphere built by Shakespeare in his play *Macbeth*. They are (1) *Supernatural* which is typified by *darkness* and *evil powers* and (2) *violence* which is typified by *blood* and *violent language*, imagery, metaphor, etc. It is through these devices that Shakespeare has achieved the desired success in creating suitable atmosphere of tragedy in *Macbeth*.

Characters. The chief points to be remembered, at this stage, about the characters in *Macbeth* are that *except the two* characters of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth and to some extent that of Banquo, the rest of the minor characters have been more or less *flattened down*. Shakespeare's aim was to make the two main characters—of Macbeth and of Lady Macbeth—*to stand out in relief* and to be built on a *great style*. Although Banquo has been fully imagined, and Duncan has been carefully drawn, yet *none* of them *stands higher* than Macbeth and his lady. In its aspect

that it has one major figure as its hero, *Macbeth* has *closer affinity* with *classical* tragedy. It is similar to the classical model in many other aspects, especially *simplicity.* One point which should be remembered about Banq uo is that he is a *fine example of what is often called by critics the 'point of rest.'* Such a character is *necessary* in a tragedy like Macbeth. Banquo is *neither good nor bad.* He is on the other hand an *onlooker* who is not *swayed by forces.* He reacts to all alike from the standpoints of a *common man.*

Porter Scene. There is *little relief* in Macbeth. Only the Porter Scene stands *prominent* among other minor devices to provide relief in the course of the *terrible swiftness* with which the action moves through the atmosphere of blood and darkness. But if looked deeply, the Porter Scene is, too, *terrible in many ways.* It is a *bitter piece of irony* which enhances the total tragic effect of the situation. Some critics, like *Coleridge and* others, reject this scene as absurd because they claim that there was no *no occasion* for the comic behaviour and dialogue of the porter at a time when the situation had *immensely intensified* and when a serious crime was going to be committed. In their opinion, it *injures* the steady course of the play. They go to the extent of *rejecting* it on the basis that Shakespeare *never wrote* it and that it was *interpolated* afterwards. Similar objections have been raised against the *Hecate scene.* It has been pointed out they are *not Shakespearean.* It should, however, be noted that to attribute the Porter Scene or some other portions of the play to some imaginary writer, seems to be absurd and dangerous a practice. The fact is that the comic scene of the porter is *ghastly.* He imagines himself to be *the porter of hell-gate* itself. Even before we have time to laugh at his ludicrous behaviour and humorous remarks, we are *planged* headlong into the *horrible current of bitter tragedy.* We should not forget that the *knocking at the gate* occurs at the same time and this knocking is in a way *a most terrible* happening in the whole tragedy of *Macbeth.*

Irony. There are a lot of instances of irony in Shakespeare's *Macbeth.* It is sometimes *flavoured with*

bitterness and sometimes with humour. He uses it in comic as well as in tragic scenes. The term dramatic irony suggests a device of using words having *double meanings* for the audience and the characters on the stage. In *Macbeth* the irony is *subtle* because it is *retrospective.* This point will be dealt with later on in more detail with proper illustrations of the ironical devices adopted by Shakespeare in *Macbeth.* At this stage it should, however, be noted that there is a *prevailing irony* in this play. We give only one of such examples here in order *to clarify* the meaning of the term. When Macbeth says to Lady Macbeth, '*The King comes here tonight,*' and she replies '*And when goes hence,*' we are at once struck with a sense of irony. There is an *ironical touch* in this dialogue.

Poetry. Some critics claim that as Shakespeare borrowed material from other sources, therefore there is *nothing original* in him *except the charming pieces of poetry.* This statement is correct only to some extent. No doubt Shakespeare borrowed characters and plot, etc., from other sources, but he handled them in his own way and *threw over them* the *brilliance of his imagination.* He has been able to produce *immortal* dramatic masterpieces which have been *tested* generation after generation and have been *liked* not for mere poetry but for *many* other *aspects* which in relation to many particular things we will discuss in the following pages. Here it should be remembered that *Macbeth* is full of most *magnificent poetry.* It is worthwhile to throw a glance over the play "for the sake of its *tunes and harmonies*" proposes John Drinkwater. We must recognise the sheer *musical* difference between :

> ......Light thickens, and the crow
> Makes wing to the rooky wood"

and the *youthful* :

> *"Gallop space, you fiery-footed steeds*
> *Towards Phoebus' lodging ; such a waggoner*
> *As Phaethon would whip you to the west*
> *And bring in cloudy night immediately.*

We must try to discover, according to the suggestion of the above named critic, how—having achieved such *complete mastery* over words—Shakespeare will now use them but as a *sounding-board* or little more, for a *meaning that quite transcends their unaided sense.*" In the opinion of this critic it is a "magic use of words" in *Macbeth* which proves how *impatient* Shakespeare grew of language. "He wanted, on occasion, to give his actors *weapons of words* with which to batter—reason apart, if need be—upon the emotions of their audience." He uses effective expressions to drive home his meaning clearly. "When Lady Macbeth, her mind hissing and coiling like a snake preparing to strike, says :

> ...... Thou'dst have, great Glamis,
> That which cries, "Thus thou must do, if thou have it" ;
>
> And that which rather thou dost fear to do
> Than wishest should be undone"

it is hard......for the hearer to discover an exact meaning." "But any Lady Macbeth," remarks Drinkwater, "can convey to her audience—for all that she may rightly wish the meaning came clearer—what her fears of Macbeth are." Such lines are, of course, *tiresome* and *incoherent* in spite of their music. We will discuss this point in detail at more proper occasion.

IMPORTANT QUESTIONNAIRE

The answers to the Important University questions posed here in this 'Questionnaire' may be found in Section III, introducing Shakespeare's Macbeth. The students are advised to prepare themselves thoroughly in the light of these questions.

- Justify the title of *Macbeth.*
- "*Macbeth* is a tragedy of *ambition.*" Discuss.
- Give the plot of *Macbeth* in abstract form.
- Reproduce the story of *Macbeth* in summarised form.

●Trace the evolution of action in Shakespeare's Tragedy, *Macbeth*.

●Professor Moulton remarks about *Macbeth* that if its "two halves be taken separately, they will be found to constitute Nemesis complete in itself." Prove.

●Some critics claim that there are three forms of action racing along side by side in *Macbeth*. What are they ? Explain.

●Shakespeare has failed to make us throw open the flood-gates of sympathy for a villain set up as a hero. Discuss this statement with reference to *Macbeth*.

●Describe the significance of hallucination in Shakespeare's *Macbeth*.

●"The 'Witch Scenes' in *Macbeth* are interlinked and interwoven into the texture of the plot and serve the purpose of heightening artistic harmony in the play." Discuss.

●"*Macbeth* is unique among Shakespeare's tragedies as being (*a*) Wholly supernatural and (*b*) Wholly emotional." Prove.

●"Shakespeare has set up a villain as a hero in *Macbeth*." Comment.

●"The colour of blood is the only colour that relieves the darkness" in *Macbeth*. Discuss.

●Write a note on the character scheme in *Macbeth*.

●"The Porter Scene is most dreadful in *Macbeth*." Comment.

●Enumerate some of the striking features of *Macbeth*.

●Write a note on the 'magic use of words' in *Macbeth*.

SECTION IV

A CRITICAL SURVEY OF MACBETH

Date of Publication and Composition of the Play

It is necessary for us to fix the date of publication and composition of a work of artistic value in order to properly appreciate its merits with reference to the social set up of the time.

Publication—1623. "*Macbeth*," says Verity, "was first published, so far as we know, in 1623, in the first Folio edition of Shakespeare's plays where it is placed between *Julius Caesar* and *Hamlet*."

Composition—1605-1606. Eminent scholars have devoted their energies to make researches regarding the date of composition of *Macbeth* and have at last succeeded in allotting more or less accurate date within the limits of the period between the years 1605 and 1606. Let us see how they did so.

Two Sources. We may fix the date of Shakespeare's play on the basis of two sources which generally lead us to quite an ample evidence. These two sources consist of (1) external evidence and (2) internal evidence. Besides these, there are some other confirmatory sources as well. Of the two sources referred to above, the first is more reliable because it is founded on facts, unlike the second which is important only so far as it goes a long way to corroborate the first through conjectures, suppositions and guess-work.

External evidence (*a*) **1606.** Two clear indications set a limit of time within which we may adequately locate the date of composition of *Macbeth*. Facts prove that it must have been written after March 1603 because (1) it was then that the crowns of England and Scotland were united as a consequence of the succession to the English throne of King James, who was also the King of Scotland, to please whom Shakespeare seems

to have dealt in *Macbeth* a theme which arouses our interest about Scotland. Such a theme must have been presented before the new king as a *compliment*. This compliment is implied in the character of Banquo who has been shown as the ancestor of a new dynasty to which, by suggestion, James himself belonged. (2) Macbeth stirs up much interest in the *supernatural*. This aspect was more interesting to King James who considered himself an authority on witchcraft to such an extent that he revived the practice of touching for evil which was believed to guarantee the safeguard of those who were so touched against all evil influences coming from the supernatural quarters.

(*b*) **1610**. According to some researches, it has been proved that *Macbeth* could not have been composed after April 1610. The evidence is that in the diary of Doctor Simon Forman, who had seen the play acted at the Globe Theatre, the date April 20, 1610, has been given along with a resume of the main incidents of the play. Relying on this diary and the entries in it, we may safely conclude that the claim put forward about the authenticity of the date quoted above is correct.

(*c*) **1605-1606.** Some allusions to contemporary events have helped the scholars to confine the date of composition of *Macbeth* within narrower limits of time. These allusions are topical in their nature and may be enumerated as follows :—

(*i*) There is a distinct reference to Banquo's ghost in *Middleton's play* entitled, '*The Puritan.*' This reference runs thus "*We'll have a ghost in a white sheet sit at the upper end of the table.*" Now Middleton had composed his *Puritan* in 1607. It proves that *Macbeth* must have been written before the year 1607.

(*ii*) There are again many passages in *Marston's Sophonisba* which was written in 1606, to which *Bradley* has given much importance. These passages resemble closely those in *Macbeth.*

If we suppose that Marston had borrowed material from Shakespeare's *Macbeth* then an obvious conclusion is that *Macbeth* must have been composed before the year 1606.

(*iii*) The popularity of Shakespeare's *Macbeth* has been supposed to have inspired *Albion* to include a history of Macbeth in the second edition of his book entitled *Albion's England*, published in 1606. If it is correct, we may conclude that *Macbeth* must have been written before the year 1606.

(*iv*) In **Camden's** book entitled *Remains*, which was published in 1605, there is reference to "*annointed princess during the king's evil.*" This reference has led some scholars to suppose that Shakespeare composed *Macbeth* after 1605 be-because he borrowed this passage from Camden's book.

(*v*) There is another fact on record which proves that *Macbeth* must have been composed after the year 1605 because it was in this year that **James I** visited Oxford. On that occasion he was welcomed by three students who recited before him the Latin verses based on the prediction of the witches to Macbeth and it is believed that when Shakespeare set himself to compose the Witch Scenes in Act I, the Latin verses recited by those students must have been working in his memory.

The above discussion is based on the external evidences available to us, and it suggests that the play *Macbeth* must have been composed after 1605 and probably in the year 1606.

Internal Evidence. Having examined the external proofs in order to determine the date of composition of *Macbeth*, we now concentrate our attention to the internal evidence supplied by the text of *Macbeth* itself.

(*a*) **1606**. There are three references in the Porter's speech to the events occurring in the year 1906. (1) In 1606 there was an abundant harvest and the words "*the farmer that hanged himself*," etc., are interpreted by scholars to refer to this abundance. (2) In the year 1606, the trial of *Henry Garnet*, a Jesuit, was held in connection with the gun-powder plot and the expression "*equivocator*" occurring in *Macbeth* is interpreted by scholars as being drawn from the doctrine of equivocation by which the above-named accused had based his right to justify perjury, for which he was being tried. Reference to "*equivocation*" occurs also in Act IV, Scene II, of *Macbeth*. (3) The allusion to '*a tailor stealing out of French hose*' appears to be a reference to a passage in *Nixon's Blackyear* which was published in 1606.

(*b*) **1605**. The words "*fatal bellman*" occurring in Act II, Scence II, line 3, have probably been borrowed from **Robert Dow's** '*Endowment*' in the year 1605 for the appointment of a bellman whose duty it was to sign a warning on the evening when an execution took place.

(*c*) **1603**. The expression "*the two-fold balls*" must be a reference to the mounds borne on the crowns of England and Scotland. It may also refer to the treble sceptre of which the two were used for investment in English coronation and one in the Scottish ceremony of crowning. It means that *Macbeth* was composed after 1603 when **James** had already acceded to the throne.

The above investigations confine the date of composition of *Macbeth*, within the years 1605 add 1606.

Confirmatory Evidence. Besides the external and internal proofs for determination of the date of composition of *Macbeth*, the scholars have found out some purely literary evidence, based on the characteristic qualities of *Macbeth*, to confirm the above facts.

(*i*) Before producing *Macbeth*, Shakespeare seems to be preoccupied with the question of sex. We find him indulging in this problem in his various

productions, namely *Othello, King Lear, Hamlet, Measure for Measure*, etc. In *Macbeth*, however, there is hardly a word about sex. He is silent in *Macbeth* but in *Antony and Cleopatra*, which is his next production, sex has been again presented as radiant and trimphant. Scholars, therefore, think themselves justified in allotting *Macbeth* a place at the end of the tragic period and at the commencement of the period in which he produced the last few plays. The date of this transition is 1606.

(*ii*) The conciseness of expression, the swiftness of imagery, and compressed metaphors are special features of Shakespeare's style in *Macbeth* and they go a long way to suggest a date falling later than that of the composition of all the tragedies of Shakespeare.

(*iii*) Some conclusion has been drawn by critics through metrical test which proves that Shakespeare took liberties with iambic pentameter norm more in other tragedies. Here, instead of rhymes, the emphasis is on ejambment, that is, run-on lines. In the dialogue of *Macbeth* we find speakers concluding their speeches in the middle of a line. The large number of weak-endings corroborate the conclusions drawn from the above points.

According to the above calculations the fact that *Macbeth* was composed in 1606 stands proved conclusively.

SHAKESPEARE'S SOURCES FOR MACBETH

Researches prove that Shakespeare drew inpsiration and material for *Macbeth* from various sources, some of which are authentic while others are probable and controversial.

1. A List. Briefly speaking, these sources are: **(1)** Holinshed's *Chronicles of England, Scotland and Ireland*,

(2) Buchanan's *History of Scotland* (1582), (3) Reginald Scott's *Witchraft* (1584), (4) *The Ballad of Macdobeth* (1596), (5) James I's *Demonologie* (1599), (6) *Malcolm, King of Scotland*, mentioned by Henslowe (1602), (7) North's *Plutarch*, (8) *Seneca*, (9) Elizabethan literature in general, (10) Contemporary superstitions.

2. Inventions. Thus Shakespeare's 'sources' are too numerous to be satisfactorily detailed here. Generally speaking, however much or little Shakespeare borrowed from different sources, he found it necessary to make the persons of the story into *dramatic persons* by humanizing them, that is, by making them no longer mere types but living persons with minds and intelligences. Many of the minor characters, especially those intended to bring comic relief are his own inventions ; other characters have their peculiarities accentuated ; others are, by some wresting of incidents from historical accuracy, made to be foils one to another. Shakespeare adapts his sources for his own purposes—in the interests of his dramas. In *Macbeth* he puts together events which happend at some distance of time. The revolt of Macdonwald and the invasion of the Norwegians are two distinct happenings ; they are put together to make a more desperate enterprise and to enhance the reputation of Macbeth. He borrowed plots from his sources but the atmosphere, characterisation, style, structure, dramatic technique and devices, and above all the magnificent poetry which has made *Macbeth* what it is, are strictly Shakespearean in every sense. Thus, although he economised his genius in the matter of inventing plots, he expended it freely in creating many more important things without which no play could be possible. The immortal dagger scene, the banquet scene, and the sleep-walking scene are the result of Shakespeare's original creative genius and their importance has unanimously been acknowledged by his critics. These scenes and many other major and minor devices thrill our hearts with terror and pity. The point as to how far Shakespeare is indebted to Holinshed will be discussed later. Here we should examine that portion of Holinshed's *Chronicles*

which furnished material to Shakespeare for *Macbeth.* Holinshed relates the story of the historical Macbeth in his *Chronicles of Scotland* as follows :

MACBETH-STORY IN HOLINSHED

1. Prediction to Macbeth. "It fortuned as Macbeth and Banquo journeyed towards Fores, where the King then lay, they went sporting by the way together, without other company, save only themselves, passing through the woods and fields, when suddenly, in the midst of a laund, there met them three women in strange and wild apparel, resembling creatures of other world whom, when they attentively beheld, wondering much at the sight the first of them spoke and said : *'All hail, Macbeth, thane of Glamis* (for he had lately entered into the dignity and office by the death of his Father Sinell). The second of them said : *'Hail Macbeth thane of Cawdor'.* But the third said : *'All hail Macbeth that hereafter shall be King of Scotland.'*

2. Prediction to Banquo. "Then Banquo : *'What manner of women,* (saith he) *are you, that seem so little favourable unto me, whereas to my fellow here, besides high offices, ye assign also the kingdom, appointing forth nothing for me at all ?' 'Yes'* (saith the first of them) *'we promise greater benefits unto thee* than unto *him, for he shall reign indeed, but with an unlucky end : neither shall he leave any issue behind him to succeed in his place where contrarily thou indeed shall not reign at all but of thee those shall be born which shall govern the Scottish Kingdom by long order of continual descent.'* Herewith the foresaid women vanished immediately out of their sight.

3. Fantastical Illusion. "This was reputed at the first but some vain fantastical illusion by Macbeth and Banquo, insomuch that Banquo would call Macbeth in jest, King of Scotland ; and Macbeth again would call him in the sport likewise, the father of many kings."

4. Weird Sisters. "But afterwards the common opinion was that these women were either the weird

sisters, that is, (as ye would say) the goddesses of destiny or else some nymphs or fairies imbued with knowledge of prophecy by their necromantical science, because everything came to pass as they had spoken. For shortly after, the thane of Cawdor being condemned at Fores of treason against the King committed, his lands, livings and offices were given of the King's liberality to Macbeth.

5. **Ambition.** "The same night after, at supper, Banquo jested with him and said: *Now Macbeth thou hast attained those things which the two former sisters prophesied, there remaineth only for thee to purchase that which the third said should come to pass.*' Whereupon Macbeth revolving the thing in his mind, began even then to devise how he might attain to the kingdom: but yet he thought with himself that he must tarry a time which should advance him thereto (by the divine providence) as it had come to pass in his former preferment.

6. **Royal Proclamation.** "But shortly after it chanced that King Duncan, having two sons by his wife, which was the daughter of Siward, Earl of Northumberland, he made the elder of them called Malcolm, Prince of Cumberland, as it were thereby to appoint him his successor in the kingdom immediately after his decease.

7. **Plans Usurpation.** "Macbeth sore troubled herewith, for that he saw by this means his hope sore hindered (where by the old laws of the realm, the ordinance was, that if he that should succeed were not of able age to take the charge upon himself he that was next of blood unto him should be admitted), he began to take counsel how he might usurp the kingdom by force, having a just quarrel so to do, (as he took the matter) for that Duncan did what in him lay to defraud him of all manner of title and claim, which he might in time to come, pretend unto the crown.

8. **Lady Macbeth.** "The words of the three weird sisters also (of whom before ye have heard) greatly encouraged him here unto, specially his wife lay sore upon

him to attempt the thing, as she that was very ambitious, burning in unquenchable desire to bear the name of a Queen.

9. Assassination. "At length, therefore, communicating his proposed intent with his trusty friends, amongst whom Banquo was the chiefest, upon confidence of their promised aid, he slew the King at Inverness, or (as some say) at Botgosvane, in the sixth year of his reign.

10. Usurpation. "Then having a company about him such as he had made privy to his enterprise, he caused himself to be proclaimed King, and forthwith went unto Scone, where (by common consent) he received the investure of the Kingdom, according to the accustomed manner."

SHAKESPEARE'S TREATMENT

We now "revert to the subject of *Macbeth's* relation to Holinshed's *Chronicle.*" It is clear that "Holinshed's narrative supplied the rude materials" of the tragedy. "Nothing was wanting for the dramatic treatment of the subject except its psychological development." How did Shakespeare use these materials ?

1. Handling of Materials. The salient feature in Shakespeare's handling of his materials "is the freedom he allowed himself. His deviations from history in his English and Roman historical plays," remarks Verity, "are mainly changes of time and place and do not often involve misrepresentation of fact or character. But this criticism does not apply to *Macbeth*. It is clear that Shakespeare, though he may have thought the story as historical as that of the Richards or Henries, no longer approached it as history. He approached it simply as the stuff out of which high tragedy might be wrought. Possibly the almost mythical remoteness of the dim, barbarous era to which the action belonged seemed to him to warrant whatever divergence from so-called history served his dramatic purpose. At any rate the divergences from his authority

are very considerable. Those which affect the characterisation of the *dramatis personæ* may be summed up thus."

2. Deviations in Characterisation. Verity says that Shakespeare "whitens the character of Duncan, and blackens the character of Macbeth in corresponding degree for obvious purpose of contrast ; he whitens the character of Banquo, for the same purpose, but also from a personal and complimentary motive ; and he makes Lady Macbeth less odious because at least unselfish.

(*i*) **Duncan.** "Holinshed's Duncan," says Verity, "is a young and incapable king, too 'soft and gentle of nature,' and altogether dependent on Macbeth and Banquo ; 'a faint-hearted milkesop,' 'more meet to gouerne a sort of idel moonks in some cloister, than to have the rule of such valiant and hardie men of warre as the Scots were.' His reign, we are told by historians, was as unfortunate as it was brief. Shakespear's Duncan, a man of years. is 'every inch a king,' a regal, illustrious figure ; gracious, indeed, and 'gentle,' yet strong within and capable ; one whose merits extort from his slayer's mouth the admission :

> *'this Duncan*
> *Hath borne his faculties so meek, hath been*
> *So clear iu his great office, that his virtues*
> *Will plead like angels, trumpet-tongu'd, against*
> *The deep damnation of his taking-off.'*

—a ruler whose fate will waken universal grief throughout his realm. The evident purpose of this departure from Holinshed's account is to deepen the pity of Duncan's end and the heinousness of a crime which lacks even the poor palliative of its victim's incompetence. 'Vaulting ambition' is shown to be the usurper's sole motive, as himself recognises."

(*ii*) **Macbeth.** "Holinshed's Macbeth," says Verity, "is a just, a noble ruler, at least in the earlier and longer period of his usurpation. The Macbeth of the play proves himself from the outset of his reign a fear-stricken despot,

with whom the instinct of self-preservation soon becomes a ruling passion for blood. In fact, all the good in Holinshed's picture of Macbeth as ruler is ignored and the evil intensified to the utmost. Yet Holinshed's picture itself did but scant justice to Macbeth, whom the more authentic of Scottish chronicles 'paint as the greatest king that early Scotland had, respected by his enemies, honoured in the ancient Church, beloved of the Scottish people'."

(*iii*) **Banquo.** "Again," says Verity, "the Banquo of Holinshed's story is privy to the murder of Duncan. But the dramatic balance required that he should be made a foil to Macbeth in the face of similar 'soliciting' by the powers of evil; nor could the traditional ancestor of the House of Stuart be held up to infamy in a play that was designed to pay special compliment to the first Stuart occupant of the English throne. So we get the Banquo of *Macbeth*."

(*iv*) **Lady Macbeth.** "On the other hand," says Verity, "Lady Macbeth is bettered. In the Chronicle she is fiercely self-seeking. 'The words of the three weird sisters greatlie incouraged him hereunto (*i.e.*, the murder) but speciallie his wife lay sore vpon him to attempt the thing, as she that was verie ambitious, burning in vnquenchable desire to beare the name of a queene.' Shakespeare has absolved his Lady Macbeth from this passion. She 'unsexes' herself and renounces the influences on her better nature, but she does it for Macbeth's sake alone; she exemplifies all the evils of uncontrolled ambition but the embition is not for self: rather, it costs her the most supreme sacrifice of self. In all these points of characterisation, then, Shakespeare has broken boldly from his guide. But still bolder is the way he has grafted on to the Macbeth-story the circumstances of an older tragedy in Scottish history."

THE DONWALD-STORY

Critics claim that Shakespeare built up the career and character of his Macbeth on the model of Donwald,

another Scottish assassin who had treacherously murdered King Duff. The story of Donwald has been given by Honlinshed just twenty pages before in his *Chronicles*. Let us first see what the actual story is. It is as follows :—

1. **Wife's Role**. "Donwald thus being the more kindled in wrath by the words of his wife, determined to follow her advice in the execution of so heinous an act."

2. **Royal Thanks**. "It chanced that the King, upon the day before, had purposed to depart forth of the castle (Fores), was long in his oratory at his prayers, and there continued till it was late in the night. At the last, coming forth, he called such afore him as had faithfully served in pursuit of apprehension of the rebels, and giving them hearty thanks, he bestowed sundry honourable gifts among them of the which number Donwald was one, as he that had been ever accounted a most faithful servant to the King.

3. **Chamberlains Intoxicated**. "At length, having talked with them a long time, he got him into his privy chamber, only with two of his chamberlains, who having brought him to bed, came forth again, and then fell to banquetting with Donwald and his wife, who had prepared divers delicate dishes, and sundry sorts of drinks, for their rear supper or collation, whereat they sat up so long, till they had charged their stomachs with such full gorges, that their heads were no sooner got to the pillow, but asleep they were so fast, that a man might have removed the chamber over them, sooner than to awake them out of their drunken sleep.

4. **Gets King Murdered**. "Then Donwald, though he abhorred the act greatly in heart, yet through instigation of his wife he called four of his servants unto him (whom he had made privy to his wicked intent before, and framed to his purpose with large gifts) and now declaring unto them after what sort they should work the feat, they gladly obeyed his instructions, and speedily going about the murther, they entered the chamber (in which the King lay), a little before cocks crow, where they secretly cut his throat as he lay sleeping.

5. Throws Suspicion on Chamberlains. "Donwald, about the time that the murther was in doing, got him amongst them that kept the watch, and so continued in company with them all the residue of the night. But in the morning, when the noise was raised in the King's chamber how the king was slain, his body conveyed away, and the bed all betrayed with blood, he with the watch ran thither, as though he had known nothing of the matter, and breaking into the chamber, and finding cakes of blood in the bed, and on the floor about the sides of it, he forthwith slew the chamberlains, as guilty of that heinous murder, and then like a madman running to and fro, he ransacked every corner within the castle, as though it had been to have seen if he might have found either the body, or any of the murtherers hid in any privy place: but at length coming to the postern gate, and finding it open, he burdened the chamberlains, whom he had slain, with all the fault, they having the keys of the gates committed to their keeping all the night, and therefore it could not be otherwise (said he) but that they were of counsel in the committing of that most detestable murther."

SHAKESPEARE'S TREATMENT

1. Model for Macbeth. Dr. Herford says, "*Macbeth's* career, and to some extent his character, are modelled on those of another Scottish assassin, Donwald, whose treacherous murder of King Duff, Holinshed had described in vivid detail some twenty pages before, while of Duncan's murder he recorded merely the bare fact. Donwald, an officer of the king, enjoying his absolute trust, entertained him in the castle of Fores, of which he had charge. His wife incited him to use his opportunity, 'and shewed him the means whereby he might soonest accomplish it.'

2. Wife's Role. Donwald himself 'abhorred the act great in heart,' but yields to his wife's urgency. Duff on retiring sends a present to his host; the grooms in the king's chamber, plied with meat and drink by his wife's care, sleep heavily and fall victims, next morning, to Donwald's

'pious rage,' fearful portents ensue; the sun is darkened; birds and beasts run counter to their common initincts. All these details Shakespeare has transferred to the story of Duncan, and they add greatly to its tragic force.

3. The Two Macbeths. Holinshed's Macbeth is only his victim's 'kinsman and his subject'; Shakespeare violates a yet stronger instinct as 'his host,' 'who should against his murder shut the door, not bear the knife himself.' Holinshed's *Macbeth* plans and executes the murder with matter-of-fact promptitude, without a trace of hesitation or compunction; Shakespeare's Macbeth, like Donwald, has accesses of deep reluctance, in which his wife's resolute energy turns the scale.

4. Lady Macbeth. Holinshed's Lady Macbeth urges her husband 'to attempt the thing,' but has no part in its execution. Thus the elements of the relation between Macbeth and Lady Macbeth, and the hesitations and 'infirmity' which chiefly make him a tragic figure at all, are suggested by Holinshed's Donwald, not by his Macbeth.

5. Political Background. Much even of the political background of the murder belongs rather to the story of Duff. Holinshed's Macbeth acts with the complicity of 'his trusty friends'—Banquo among the rest; and 'upon confidence of their promised aid.' Shakespeare's Macbeth, like Donwald, has no political confederates, can count upon no 'taking off,' is discovered, and precipitates discovery by overacting his feigned grief.

6. Another Difference. Even Donwald has the aid of trusty servants: Shakespeare sends husband and wife unaided to their work amid the cry of owls and the prayers of startled sleepers. And the very fact that in respect of the actual execution of the ruthless deed Shakespeare reverts from the Donwald-story to the Macbeth-story and makes Macbeth slay the king with his own hand is another illustration of the dramatist's conscious and consistent purpose of not sparing him our utmost execration.

7. Formidable Apparatus. One other point in the relation Macbeth bears to Holinshed—a point connected with the Macbeth-story, not the Donwald-story—remains to be noticed. "Holinshed's version employs a formidable apparatus of enchantment. Macbeth receives three warnings, on three occasions, from three distinct classes of prophetically gifted beings." These are (**1**) the three "weird sisters, that is the goddesses of destinie, or else some nymphs or feiries, indued with knowledge of prophesie by their necromantical science," who meet Macbeth on the fatal heath ; (**2**) "certeine wizzards, in whose words he put great confidence (for that the prophesie had happened so right, which the three faries or weird sisters had declared unto him)" who warned him to take heed of Macduff ; and (**3**) "a certeine witch, whome hee had in great trust," who duped him by her "sweet bodements." These mysterious and malefic beings are blended into the " weird sister witches," for the evident sake of concentration of dramatic effect.

MACBETH-STORY IN CONTEMPORARY LITERATURE

As the story described by Holinshed in his *Chronicle* shows, Shakespeare stands indebted to that historian for the plot of *Macbeth.* " But apparently," remarks A. W. Verity, " Shakespeare was not the first Elizabethan writer to handle the story of Macbeth. Possibly it had been dramatised already.

1. Ballad of Macdobeth. One of such a dramatic production was *Ballad of Macdobeth.* It was entered on the Register of the Stationers' Company August 27, 1596. The same entry records *"the ballad entitled the taming of a Shrew."* " If," says Collier, *The Taming of a Shrew*, which we know to have been a play, were so recorded, it is not unlikely that the *Ballad of Macdobeth* was of the same character." Again, in the pamphlet Kempt's Nine Days' Wonder (1600) occurs a reference to the *Ballad of Macdobeth* implying "that the piece had been publicly represented, and that it was not merely a printed *ballad*,"

but was a piece which was dramatically performed on the stage. "There is ground, therefore," says Verity, "for supposing that the Macbeth-story had been handled in some literary form or other, whether a genuine ballad or a rough play like the old *King Leir and his Three Daughters* which preceded and partly inspired *King Lear*. The possibilities, indeed, of the story were obvious. Aptly had the Scot writer Buchanan in his *Terum Scoticarum Historia* (1528) described the mysterious episodes of Macbeth's career as "*theatris...aptiora quam historia.*"

2. **Malcolm King of Scottes.** "It is interesting to note," says Verity, "that the attention of their unknown dramatists had been turned to the rich stores of Scottish history and legend. Thus between July 1567 and March 1568 the Master of the Revels spent money on scenery for a *Tragedie of the King of Scottes.* A play called *Malcolm King of Scottes* is mentioned in the diary of the theatrical manager Henslowe under the date April 27, 1602. The Gowry conspiracy, which presents an analogy to Cawdor's, is known to have been dramatised as early as December, 1604.

3. **An Interlude.** "We should not forget the incident which," reminds Verity, "associates King James' visit to Oxford in 1605 with the literary history of Shakespeare's play. On the King's arrival at the gate of St. John's College a short scene or interlude was enacted." According to contemporary account, "Three young youths in habit and attire like nymphs, confronted him," and in the words of Verity "apostrophised the illustrious visitors in a florid Latin oration, on behalf of England, Scotland, and Ireland, comparing themselves with the Weird Sisters who had predicted to Banquo the regal honour of his line, and invoking a yet richer fulfilment of the prediction. "This incident," continues Verity, "may have come to Shakespeare's knowledge and been the germ of *Macbeth*. On the other hand, it is not probable that this subject for the interlude would have been chosen, had Shakespeare already handled it."

AN ESTIMATE

1. **Shakespeare's Obligations.** "Now, while it is proper always to recognise Shakespeare's obligations where they exist, we must be very careful not to over-estimate them," says Verity. "The word 'source' or 'original' will mislead us unless we ask ourselves what constitutes the greatness of his plays, and consider how little that greatness is due to any nominal sources: how such qualities as characterisation (ever the crown of the dramatist's art), humour and wit, poetry and pathos and tragic intensity, deft manipulation of plot and under-plot and varied relief, are Shakespeare's own gift, never the inspiration of another. This is in truth a vital point, and on it Dr. Furness has some valuable remarks, written indeed with reference to the tragedies, more particularly *King Lear*, but applicable (*mutatit muttandit*) to all Shakespeare's plays or which some 'original' has been unearthed."

2. **Shakespeare's Contribution.** "What false impressions are conveyed," remarks Verity, "in the phrases which we have to use to express the process whereby Shakespeare converted the stocks and stones of the old dramas and chronicles into living, breathing men and women! We say 'he drew his original' from this source or he 'found his materials' in that source. But how much did he 'draw' or what did he 'find'? Granting that he drew from Holinshed, or whence you please, did he find Lear's madness, or the pudder of the elements, or the inspired babbling of the Fool? Or whatsoever makes his tragedies sublime and heaven-high above all other human compositions – of that we find never a trace......When, after reading one of his tragedies, we turn to what we are pleased to call the 'original of his plot,' I am reminded of those glittering gems, of which Heine speaks, that we see at night in lovely gardens, and think must have been left there by kings' children at play, but when we look for these jewels by day we see only wretched little worms which crawl painfully away, and which the foot forbears to crush only out of strange pity."

CLASSIFICATION OF MACBETH

A question is often raised whether *Macbeth* may rightly be described as a historical play. The answer is that although *Macbeth* has a historical background, it is not in the strict sense a historical play.

1. History. There is no doubt that the leading characters in this play have been borrowed from Scottish history. Duncan, for example, was actually a king of Scotland. He was treacherously murdered by Macbeth, his cousin, at Bothgownan. Similarly, the flight of Duncan's son Malcolm to England is also a historical fact. It is also true that Edward the Confessor had offered him help. Again, the fact that a battle took place between the English forces and the forces of Macbeth in which the latter was defeated and killed, is also a fact corroborated by history. In all the main incidents Shakespeare has closely followed the account given in Holinshed's *Chronicles.* After taking his materials from the *Chronicles*, Shakespeare created old Celtic atmosphere of primitive Scotland and painted the turbulent half-civilized feudal age when the motto of life was 'might is right.' It was an age of rude violence unrestrained by law. There was general insecurity of life and property. The people were superstitious. All these things including the wild grandeur of the scenery, the passions of primeval intensity, have been picturesquely represented by Shakespeare in his *Macbeth*. On these ground it may be maintained this play has a historical setting. In spite of all this, *Macbeth* cannot be described as a historical play due to more than one reasons.

2. Standard of Judgment. In histories the standard of judging men is the assessment of their deeds, while in tragedies it is the assessment of their character. In the histories we concentrate our attention on action in the limited world while in tragedies we judge the actions in the light of spiritual and moral standards. In a tragedy, unlike history, failure in life constitutes the ground-work of spiritual success. In histories success or failure depends upon actual achievement in life. The failures of tragic

characters fulfil their object of inspiring us. Their failures serve to kindle our deep love and admiration. Thus the standard of judging men in histories is by their practical deeds in the world, while in tragedies by their moral capacities. In tragedies the failures may constitute success but in histories it does not.

3. Motive. Quite different motives serve as inspiration for histories and tragedy of Shakespeare. In histories he interprets national life while in tragedies he devotes himself to the investigation of the presence and scope of evil and its influence on man's life. Æffusive patriotism of the poet and healthy optimism are the characteristic qualities of histories and not of tragedies. He does not enter into philosophic desertation on the origin and the nature of the evil on earth but does, however, acknowledge the existence of evil frankly. When the influence of the evil falls on the progress of events, as, for instance, Duncan and Banquo are murdered, no deliverer comes but in histories the catastrophe is mitigated by the introduction of a deliverer. Thus, histories and tragedies have different motives of interpreting the national life and of investigating of the problem of evil, respectively.

4. Fable. We know that Shakespeare borrowed the main story from Holinshed's *Chronicles* but these *Chronicles* too are not authentic because Holinshed mixes fable with history so freely that its authenticity becomes doubtful. In his history Holinshed mentions the three women in wild apparel and Shakespeare, borrowing this idea, has developed it into a set of witches which have assumed quite a new character falling apart from even the popular conception about the witches. In their functions too these witches are quite unconventional.

5. Myth. Here the supernatural prompts man to evil deeds. It awakens wicked thoughts in his heart. We are all the time reminded of the inevitable retribution. Punishment follows crime. It is, therefore, that *Macbeth* may more safely be called to be a mythical rather than a historical character.

6. Human Motives. Pure facts of history have not been dealt with by Shakespeare in this play. We find him filling the mythical outlines with human motives and actions so that the crimes committed by Macbeth are the consequence partly of the promptings by the witches and partly of his own frailty of character. This evil has been brought to the surface by the agency of witches. It has been done in such a way that we cannot hold the outer forces to be solely responsible for his crimes. So *Macbeth*, in its basic nature, is not a historical play but a mythical adaptation of history climbing up into horrible tragedy.

7. True to Aristotle's Definition. The principles laid down by Aristotle for a tragedy are that it must elevate the mind through the influences of terror and pity. In *Macbeth*, the supernatural element, the sight of Banquo's ghost at the banquet and a number of other factors, constitute happenings which are impressive and awful. Our sense of pity is aroused by the perpetual happiness tormenting the hero with fear and remorse. When we see him led to his destruction by an artificially created over-confidence, we are moved to pity. Other elements stimulating our sympathy for the hero are the delirium, lunacy and continuous afflictions and agony.

8. Shakespearean Tragedy. The argument is that although Shakespeare has drawn all materials from historical sources, yet *Macbeth* is not a history but in all its aspects a tragedy because it is concerned with conflict and ruin of the soul, and of the life of the hero. Its subject is the struggle of good and evil. We find a person of high status, noble character and great power falling down to ignobility and ruin. He falls partly through his own evil deeds and partly because the supernatural and circumstantial forces bring the hidden evil to the surface. Macbeth becomes too ambitious and his ambitions thrust him into a series of crimes leading to ultimate ruin. Emotions of pity and horror are aroused in our hearts when we watch the tragic downfall of a person who was once so great, so noble and so glorious. All the forces acting in the play link the victim to the ultimate catastrophe. The essestial

characteristic of a tragedy is that it should present the mental or psychological conflict of the hero. This is the essence of *Macbeth* as well. Here the hero is placed in a certain situation in which he involves himself in an unsuccessful conflict with circumstances. He is inspired with ambition. The witches fan the fire. Lady Macbeth resolutely facilitates the fulfilment of her husband's ambition. Macbeth himself tries to struggle against the wicked means which he had to adopt for the realisation of his desire but his endeavours are unavailing and he ultimately falls on the evil way. The better nature of Macbeth has to yield before the evil. The storm and stress of circumstances prove too strong for his feeble moral sense. Thus, the action moves in a peculiar Shakespearean style.

9. Conclusion. *Macbeth* is a Shakespearean tragedy even with reference to its conclusion. It ends not with only ruin and desolation but with a promise of better things. It strikes an optimistic note and forecasts the dawn of a new and better era for Scotland. We expect Malcolm's reign to be that of peace and prosperity, free from the tyrannies which the usurper had so far subjected it.

10. Forecast. Another reason why *Macbeth* cannot be claimed to be a history is that forecast is not possible in a Shakespearean tragedy, like *Macbeth's* action takes unexpected turns and defeats all our forecasts of the future. In histories, on the other hand, rational forecast may be made on the basis of characters and actions. In Shakespearean histories like *King John* and *Henry V*, our guess may seldom fail to be true. In *Macbeth*, on the other hand, criminal and tyrannical instincts in the hero grow suddenly. Similarly his lady is afflicted with an awful malady in such a way that a forecast about such happenings is impossible. The play thus becomes a tragic one because we come across certain promises and possibilities which end in nothing. It is so because utter ruin suddenly overtakes the hero and his lady. We are not prepared because we suppose them to the capable of better things. The tables are, however, turned so suddenly with

dramatic surprise that all our guess, conjectures and forecasts are defeated. The cruel murder of King Duncan, the death of Lady Macbeth and of her husband are not sufficient to make the play a tragedy because they could be made a fitting subject-matter for historical drama as well. *What makes it a tragedy is the conflict of Macbeth with himself, his defeat, his losing himself astray on to the wicked side of life, his apparent success followed by his utter ruin—a ruin caused by the outraged moral forces—these elements contribute to make the play a tragedy.* Thus, *Macbeth* is a tragedy in every sense.

MACBETH AS A TRAGEDY

We know already that Shakespearean tragedy represents a *conflict* which terminates in a catastrophe. Professor Bradley divides Shakespearean tragedy into three parts. "The *first* of these," says he, "sets forth or *expounds the situation* or state of affairs, out of which the conflict arises; and it may, therefore, be called the *Exposition*. The *second* deals with the definite beginning, the growth and the vicissitudes of the *conflict*. It forms accordingly the *bulk* of the play, comprising the second, third and fourth Acts, and usually part of the first and a part of the fifth. The *final* section of the tragedy shows the issue of the conflict in a *catastrophe*. "The application of this scheme of division," says Bradley, "is naturally more or less arbitrary. *The first part glides into the second, and the second into the third, and there may often be difficulty in drawing the lines between them.*" "But it is still harder," says he "to divide spring from summer, and summer from autumn; and yet spring is spring, and summer summer."

Exposition of *Macbeth*—**unique.** Shakespeare's "usual plan in tragedy," says Bradley, "is to begin with a short scene, or part of a scene, either full of life and stir, or in some other way arresting. Then having secured a hearing, he procceds to conversations at a lower pitch, accompanied by little action but conveying much information. The opening of *Macbeth* is remarkable. There is

probably *no parallel* to its first scene, "*where*," in the opinion of Professor Bradley, "*the senses and imagination are assaulted by a storm of thunder and supernatural alarm.* This scene is only eleven lines long, but its influence is so great that the next can safely be occupied with a mere report of *Macbeth's* battles—a narrative which would have won much less attention if it had opened the play." Shakespeare makes us "conscious at once of *some power* which is to influence the whole action to the hero's undoing." Continuing, Bradley says, "In *Macbeth* we *see* and *hear* the witches...we realise them at the end of the first page, and are almost ready to regard the hero as *doomed.* Often, again, at one or more points during the exposition this feeling is reinforced by some expression that has an *ominous effect.* The words we hear from *Macbeth*, '*so foul and fair a day I have never seen*' echo, though he knows it not, the last words we heard from the witches, '*Fair is foul, and foul is fair.*' Bradley remarks that the '*situation*' in *Macbeth* is *simple* and therefore the *exposition* is *short.*

Conflict in *Macbeth*—**double.** "Not seldom," says Professor Bradley, "the conflict may quite naturally be conceived as lying between two persons, of whom the hero is one, or, more fully, as lying between two parties or groups, in one of which the hero is the leading figure. Or if we prefer to speak......of passions, tendencies, ideas, principles, forces, which animate these persons or groups, we may say that two of such passions or ideas, regarded as animating two persons or groups, are the combatants." Coming to *Macbeth* the Professor observes that in this play "the hero and heroine are opposed to the representatives of Duncan," and the majority of *dramatis personae* fall into antagonist groups with the result that the conflict between these groups ends with the defeat of the hero. The important aspect of *Macbeth* is that here "there is an outward conflict of persons and groups, there is also a conflict of forces in the hero's soul," and "the interest of the former can hardly be said to exceed that of the latter." Illustrating his point, the professer says, "Treasonous ambition in Macbeth collides with loyalty and patriotism

in Macduff and Malcolm : here is the outward conflict. But these powers or principles equally collide in the soul of Macbeth himself: here is the inner." Action is the centre of the story. The concentration of interest on the inward struggle emphasises the fact that the action is the expression of character. In *Macbeth* the hero, however much influenced by others, supplies the main driving power of action. The development of conflict in *Macbeth* is rapid. In spite of much inward resistance, Macbeth hurries to the murder of Duncan and attains the crown. The upward movement is extraordinarily swift and the crisis arrives early. Thereafter the cause of *Macbeth* turns downward and soon he hastens to ruin.

Crisis in *Macbeth*—followed by pause. When the crisis has been reached there comes dramatic difficulties and dangers. Shakespeare knew that "an immediate and crushing counter-action would, no doubt, sustain the interest, but it would precipitate the catastrophe, and leave a feeling that there has been too long a preparation for a final effect so brief. "What seems necessary," observes Professor Bradley, "is a momentary pause, followed by a counter-action which mounts at first slowly, and afterwards, as it gathers force, with quickening speed." In *Macbeth* Shakespeare has kept the hero of the stage for a long time—during 450 lines—while the counter-action is rising. In the fourth Act of *Macbeth* the movement of action leaves an impression of 'drag' upon our minds. The pause in action does not come directly after the crisis It is deferred in *Macbeth* "till the murder of Duncan has been followed by that of Banquo, and this by the banquet scene." Analysing further, Bradley says, "Macbeth's action in the first part of the tragedy followed on the prediction of the witches who promised him the throne. When the action moves forward again after the banquet scene the witches appear oncc more, and make those fresh promises which again drive him forward. This repetition of a first effect produces a fateful feeling. It generally also stimulates expectation as to the new movement about to begin.

Humour in *Macbeth*—pathetic. As a rule pathos in Shakespearean tragedies is not terrible or lacerating and even, if painful,. is "accompanied by the sense of beauty and by an outflow of admiration or affection, which came with an inexpressible sweetness after the tension of the crisis and the first counter-stroke." Giving illustration, Bradley says that the "short scene (IV. ii,) in which the talk of Lady Macduff and her little boy is interrupted by the entrance of the murderers, is a passage of touching beauty and heroism. The example of humorous or semi-humorous passages may also be sought in the above scene. There is a touch of comedy in the conversation of Lady Macduff with her little boy. Besides this the variety in tone, relief, pathos and humour may be marked in the passages where the Porter appears and also where Macduff receives the news of the slaughter of his wife and babes. All of such scenes touch the heart with a sense of beauty and pathos and 'open the spring of love and of tears.' They contain the sweetness of Shakespeare's humanity for which he is so loved. They are highly appealing in the whole of the play because they are marked by irresistible persuasion.

Catastrophe in *Macbeth*—inevitable and extended. "Shakespeare," says Bradley, "very rarely makes the least attempt to surprise by his catastrophies." In *Macbeth* it is felt to be inevitable, though the precise way in which it will be brought about is not, of course, foreseen. Dealing with the other point, Bradley says "In some cases Shakespeare spreads the catastrophe out, so to speak, over a considerable space, and thus shortens that difficult section which has to show the development of the counter-action............The most impressive scene in *Macbeth*, after that of Duncan's murder, is the sleep-walking scene; and it may truly, if not literally, be said to show the catastrophe of Lady Macbeth." The actual end makes us feel the greatness of Macbeth, and still more it helps us to regard him in his day of doom as hero. While we desire for his defeat our feelings are mingled with enthusiastic admiration and sympathy for him.

Pivot in *Macbeth*—Character. *Macbeth* is a 'character-play,' a tragedy of character—of one outstanding personage. It is a play in which the appeal is the result of the interaction of two forces, namely, character and action, and in which all action is the 'expression of character' itself. Although *Macbeth* has many characters playing quite important roles in descending order, the character of the principal person, Macbeth, stands prominent among all from the beginning of the play to its end. Thus, it may be described as a tragedy of a single character who eclipses all others. It depicts the behaviour of the hero in course of the conflict arising out of his strugle against the various forces pressing him from all sides. Sometimes the suffering and calamity of the principal character rise and other times fall, sometimes become light, other times intense ; and the action moves on till it reaches the stage of catastrophe where it ends in disturbed death of the hero. *Macbeth* is thus a tale of sufferings and calamity conducing to death and disaster. But what is the cause of disaster ?

Cause of Disaster—Frailty. This question brings us to what is called *'frailty.'* Some critics try to trace the roots of the calamities and disaster, befalling Macbeth, in supernatural influences. But they are wrong. The catastrophe in *Macbeth* is not the result of heavenly or supernatural visitation. It shonld not be forgotten, even for a moment, that Shakespeare's hero has always one weakness. He contributes in some measure to the disaster in which he perishes. Macbeth, for example, is keenly ambitious, Lear is passionate and lacking in control, Othello is jealous while Hamlet is introspective and troubled by moral scruples. Their frailties lead them to disaster. Tragedy arises when the hero finds himself in a situation in which the circumstances and events demand the very quality in which he is lacking. Fate conspires against Macbeth to tempt him on to his weak side, where he is bound to fail. The calamities and disaster in *Macbeth* proceed definitely from the 'frailty' or the weak traits in the outstanding character and not

from the external forces. The principal character in Shakespearean tragedy is never flawless. Macbeth is the author of his own woes because the causes of such woes lie rooted deep in his own character.

Frailty in Hero—Conscious. One of the most important points is that the victim is always 'frailty-conscious.' He knows what his weakness or weaknesses are. This consciousness contributes to the intensity of frailty. It develops in him the internal conflict. The cross currents of circumstances toss him from one woe to another—all tracing their origin to the frailty which is conscious. Macbeth has weakness—ambitious villainy—and he is not ignorant of it. He acts in a manner which he himself dislikes but is helpless, for these acts are the result of his natural and inborn weakness over which he has no control and for which he has no remedy, but of which he is keenly conscious. He recognizes his acts to be villainous but others are not vividly conscious of his frailty. It appears that only Lady Macbeth understands her husband thoroughly and is conscious of his frailty. But this point is disputable. What we are required to keep in our mind is that Macbeth's frailty is highly conscious.

Key-note of *Macbeth*—**Ambition.** The tragedy of *Macbeth* is not a tragedy of thought like *Julius Caesar*. It is on the other hand a tragedy of ambition. Dark and deadly desires of Macbeth make it cheerless and bitter.

The cause of murders is a great personal treachery inspired by the selfish ambition in Macbeth's heart. Mark Hunter remarks that the nemesis in *Macbeth* is that which waits on craven self-seeking. Ambition stirred by supernatural elements and spurred by Lady Macbeth, flares up in Macbeth's heart like fire, the flames of which spread far and wide and ultimately wrap him up in their embrace.

Tragic Sense Enhanced by Contrast. The woes and death of the principal person in *Macbeth* stands sharply contrasted with his previous happiness and glory, for here is a man in high estate. He first appears in dazzling

magnificence, laden with praises and tributes reaped through his brilliant deeds on the field of battle. He is favourite cousin of King Duncan whose words of praise fail him in his amazement at the admirable record of his kinsman. No reward may adequately repay what Macbeth has given to the nation and empire. This great man plunges headlong in systematically running current of events leading to a disastrous end of extreme horrible nautre. The ultimate fate of Macbeth effects the whole kingdom. The contrast between the two halves of his career enhances the intensity of the sense of tragedy and stirs us with a feeling of horror and pity which is an indispensible element of all tragedy.

Plot in *Macbeth*—Built by Character. In *Macbeth* plot is comparatively less important than character. The action proceeds from the character, and the tragedy revolves round the figure of Macbeth who stands out in full relief. Plot and action are composed of deeds ; and, while the action winds its course through woes and sufferings, blood and darkness, calamities and disasters, our attention is continually focussed on the activities of the tragic figure of Macbeth standing head and shoulders above the whole structure of the play. Although circumstances, Destiny or Fate appear to influence the character and action, yet the eminent personality of Macbeth, with all its villainies and frailties, is predominantly distinct as a pivot of the whole story.

Forces in Tragic Action—Two. The forces which we mark in the tragic action of *Macbeth* are two : (**1**) the human ; and (**2**) the extra-human. We observe that the story or action in *Macbeth* derives its urge from the human deeds as well as from the extra-human forces. These forces lie beyond the control of human beings. The story of *Macbeth* develops by conscious deeds of characters as well as by the super-human deeds on which man has no control. The deeds or elements over which he has no control may be interpreted also as unconscious or subconscious deeds or elements, as the case my be. They are done in course of insanity, somnambulism and

hallucination. They may be also looked at as deeds of supernatural forces, or as the result of chance or accident. So far as *Macbeth* is concerned it is the story of a single character or of the conscious deeds of the hero as well as the deeds of the forces over which he has no control. It is, in short, under the above named two forces that the action moves forward in the play. Aristotle regarded the plot as being more important than character but in *Macbeth* character is much more important than action. As a matter of fact, the centre of the tragedy of *Macbeth* lies in action issuing from character or in character issuing from action. The calamity or catastrophe follows the deed of man and the main source of these deeds is the character itself.

Passion Strain in Movement. Passion and movement serve as elements of dramatic effect. The movement of action begins with the supernatural prediction. The hero is stirred into passion and is torn with conflict. The action proceeds under strain. The background of the supernatural is used as a device to increase the strain, The passion strain which had risen to a climax begins to fall. Catastrophe brings about the end of action. Passion strain ceases. Calmness inspired by a sense of justice and bright future gives a feeling of relief.

Other Forces in Web of Action. As character is the pivot of the story of *Macbeth*, and as it is the character which contributes to the tangle of the plot, so all the complications of action rise from the character whose acts of commission and omission are responsible to produce certain effects and consequences from which springs up a chain of actions and reactions developing into complexities and enveloping the hero in a ruin resulting from his own deeds. There are, however, other forces which effect the movement of action in *Macbeth*. These forces are those of chance or accident and of the supernatural and superhuman elements in the face of which the hero is helpless to a certain extent. Certain sub-conscious or unconscious acts also appear in the main action. Among these are the somnambulism of Lady Macbeth and hallucinations of Macbeth. They

have little effect on the flow of action and discharge the function of providing a relief. Shakespeare frequently introduces witches, ghosts, the force of destiny and fatalism in his tragedies, and the story of *Macbeth* too, is influenced by the superhuman element with a view to satisfy Elizabethan whims. While introducing these witches or Weird Sisters with peculiar appearances, Shakespeare was simply echoing the feelings and beliefs of his audience, He, however, did not loose sight of the dramatic exigencies and did never lay too much stress on the supernatural. Such a stress, he knew, would bring in all he drawbacks of the Greek tragedy. It is un-Shakespearean to reduce the tragic character by making him a helpless victim in the hands of uncontrollable forces. What Shakespeare has done in Macbeth is that by linking the supernatural to the character, he has placed them in closest relation without allowing superhuman forces too much weight. The web of action in *Macbeth* continues coiling round the hero from the beginning to the end. He chooses the wrong road and the supernatural forces are closely behind his heels.

Final Impression—Pity and Compassion. Shakespearean tragic hero appeals to our pity and compassion. In *Macbeth* we mark that a hero of noble nature and character has been placed in a difficult situation. In that situation we expect him to solve a tangle which he actually fails to solve due to his weakness. Generally speaking, the hero is efficient but when placed in that particular situation his qualities are of no avail. His struggle in that situation stirs up our sympathy and compassion for him.

A Dominant Factor—Horror. One dominant factor in *Macbeth* is that of terrible horror. It is developed through various devices, including the supernatural. The horrid ruin which Macbeth ultimately faces inspires us with feelings of horror. Macbeth's philosophic utterances enhance the sense of horror, particularly towards the end, which is terrible. We feel the element of horror intensify-

ing itself at every turn in *Macbeth*. This question will be dealt with later also.

Tragic not Poetic Justice. Shakespeare does not strike 'poetic justice' because it is incompatible with the realities of life. He, however, observes what has been described by critics as 'tragic justice.' It implies that though good may go uurewarded evil does never escape punishment. Villainy is never led to flourish. In *Macbeth* the errors and crimes of the hero leads to a universal disaster in which the innocent are also involved. From this we may rightly conclude that Shakespeare did not observe poetic justice in the strict sense because he was not a moral idealist. Even when he employes the supernatural for artistic and tragic effects, he is distinctly rationalist. In *Macbeth* we learn not some ideal theory but the lesson of courage, energy, strength and all that is highest and most real in life. In spite of all this the ultimate retribution and punishment awarded to Macbeth corresponds to the idea of tragic justice in a realistic, as distinguished from ideal, sense.

Supreme Tragedy. There is a touch in the conception of *Macbeth* that makes it like gathering and breaking storm. *Hamlet, Othello,* and *Macbeth* are supreme tragedies of Shakespeare. In *Macbeth* the principal character thwarted by hostile circumstances and assailed by bitter enemies, pours forth torrents of passion ; the very depth of his soul is laid bare before us. "Such unchecked self-expression," says Watt, "is necessary to a tragedy, a soul-tempest of the most intense type." We shall estimate other merits of *Macbeth* later at the end of our critical survey. Let us for the present consider all the other important aspects of *Macbeth* in detail.

THE ATMOSPHERE IN MACBETH

The atmosphere in *Macbeth* is highly sensational. It is charged with gloom and horror. The play begins with a great storm. The witches give it a touch of mystery, evil and enchantment. The story moves through blood and crime and ends in the horror of battle. The question

arises. What is the dominating element in the atmosphere of this play and what purpose is served by such element? Is it a play of bright sunshine or that of darkness?

1. **Thick Darkness.** *Macbeth* is a bitter trageds in which an ambitious soul is in the grip of bitter conflict. Obviously the grimness of the play could not be properly developed in brightness of atmosphere. The sunshine suits comedies and not a horrible tragedy like Macbeth. According to Professor Bradley the atmosphere of Macbeth is that of thick darkness. Almost all the memorable events in this play take place at night. Those which do not occur at night take place in dark spots. Bradley quotes some very important examples to prove his contention. The vision of the dagger, for example, appears at night. The murder of King Duncan is similarly committed in the darkness of midnight. When Banquo falls in the hands of his assassins, the darkness of the evening has already spread and the murderers have to put out the taper in his hand before attacking him. Again, the sleep-walking fits ail Lady Macbeth at night. The same fact is true about the witches. They dance in the thick air of a storm. When Macbeth goes to meet the witches, he has to go to a dark cavern.

2. **Instrument of Terror.** Shakespeare artistically creates an atmosphere of fear and horror by utilizing the element of darkness. If we examine carefully we will find that Macbeth is terrified by the darkness of night. In Professor Bradley's opinion, even the faint glimmerings of the western sky at twillight are menacing in this plav. The darkness of evening is unsafe for the travellers. Banquo rides hastily to his home as the darkness of the evening thickens because grave dangers lurk in the darkness of the night. The blackness of the night is horrible because it is under its cover that black agents of night set themselves in pursuit of their prey. The howling of the wolf and the screaming of the owls all contribute to the horrors of darkness of night.

3. **Darkness Invoked.** Whenever any character is excited to the pitch he calls upon the thick darkness of

night to come and envelope the atmosphere. On one occasion Macbeth bids the stars to hide their fires while on other occasions Lady Macbeth invokes the thick night to come just like the dense smoke of hell.

4. **Sun Shines.** According to Professor Bradley's research, the sun shines only twice in the whole drama. One of such occasions is one when Duncan sees the swallows flitting round Macbeth's castle where the King's murder took place, the other is when the invading army of Malcolm besieges Dunsinane castle in order to rid the country from the tyrannical clutches of the usurper. Besides all these Shakespeare gives many slight artistic and skilful touches to deepen the effect of darkness. Professor Bradley points out that even the failure of nature in Lady Macbeth is marked by her fear of darkness – she always keeps a light by her.

5. **Effect.** The total effect of the darkness of atmosphere is that of mystery. It enhances also the gloom which is so necessary for a tragedy. The intensity of the tragic theme tackled by Shakespeare grows through darkness. Horrors of crimes are multiplied by the introduction of thick darkness. Every character in Macbeth seems to move in gloom and darkness. There are continual references to *blood* and *darkness*. The introductory scenes, which really give the setting, tell of (1) supernatural beings, (2) bloodshed—"another Golgotha," (3) the victorious and worthy General Macbeth, (4) traitors, etc. These are examples of the methods which Shakespeare contrives to produce the desired "atmosphere" for his dramas, in order to comply with the popular taste which demanded poetry, blood, and humour. Shakespeare artistically combines these threefold elements into the whole.

THE SUPERNATURAL IN MACBETH

By the supernatural we mean that which we cannot explain by natural law, *e.g.*, the ghosts in *Hamlet* and *Macbeth*; the fairies in a *Midsummer Night's Dream*; the portents in *Julius Caesar*. Some have assumed that these

supernatural elements are mere hallucinations, but when, as usually happens in Shakespeare, more than one person sees the apparition the hallucination theory breaks down. Elizabethan audiences believed in witches, etc., and Shakespeare had thus every reason for using them for dramatic purposes. The witches in *Macbeth* are used to intensify Macbeth's desire to murder the King : the omens and portents in *Julius Caesar* increase the emotional tension of the situation ! Nature appears in league with men in bringing about the death of Caesar. The fairies in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* are in keeping with the dream idea, for incongruity is the essence of dreams. With the exception of Puck, they have no active function to the play. The ghosts seen in *Macbeth, Julius Caesar, Hamlet* and *Richard III* put into visible form something of the mind of the character to whom they appear : Macbeth's guilt, Brutus's failure, Hamlet's suspicion and Richard's uneasy conscience.

Witches in Macbeth. *Macbeth* begins with a purely supernatural scene. It develops apparently under the influence of the supernatural. Three witches appear in stormy weather and set the story in motion by pronouncing predictions about the future of the hero, Macbeth, and another Scottish General, Banquo. High ambition is aroused in Macbeth's heart when the witches pronounce that he will become King of Scotland. This ambition continues to develop and gather force till it becomes the subject matter of the tragedy of deep and violent emotions. The modern man stands resolved against the conception of witches who, though having no bearing and existence at all, appear to cast a shadow over human affairs. We almost scorn such superstitions unless they are interpreted to have some deep psychological basis. Dr. Johnson advises that we must keep in mind the currents of thoughts in the days of Shakespeare while studying his productions. A dramatist, however great he may be in the field of art, is necessarily influenced by contemporary ideology. *Macbeth* was written in an age when people had faith in powers of the supernatural. The question whether Shakespeare also believed in

witches, ghosts etc., is irrelevant. He had to cater to the public even if he himself did not like the idea. The Doctor says, "In order to make a true estimate of the abilities and merits of a writer, it is always necessary to examine the spirit of his age ; and the opinions of his contemporaries" and, therefore, our attempt should be to approach *Macbeth* from the standpoint of Dr. Johnson.

The Elizabethan Conception of the Supernatural. As we know, the Elizabethan Age was that of superstition. Peple believed in supernatural beings and their influence on the activities of man. In stories, legends and poetry, etc., witches and ghosts, gods and goddesses and the like were freely mentioned and even children were acquainted with their influences and powers. A witch in the Elizabethan Age was supposed to be capable of doing miraculous things lying beyond the power of ordinary human beings. They were thought to do such things by virtue of their confederacy with Evil. In their appearance the witches in *Macbeth* are old women with choppy fingers, wrinkled faces and beards. Their sex is ambiguous. Eminent writers like Spenser and Scott have described witches in their writings. Scott says, "The sort such as are said to be witches are women which be commonly old, lame, blear-eyed, pale, foul and full of wrinkles. They are lean and deformed showing melancholy in their faces, horror of all that see them." Spenser, the famous Elizabethan writer poet, giving an idea of the habitation of witches in a piece of poetry says "that they lived in gloomy hallow glens, their cottages were built of sticks and reeds, etc." From all this we may conclude that people generally believed in the supernatural in Shakespeare's days. In such a case it is not strange that witches appear in the present tragedy. The Elizabethan audience must have been thrilled at the appearance of the supernatural. Shakespeare's witches appear to have special activity in stormy weather and darkness. They create thunder and lightning, raise storms, blow down churches and towers, etc. According to the superstitions of the age they had one thing in common—the evil eye. The foremost

power of importance which they possessed was that of foretelling future events. They could ride upon the blast and travel in sieves on the surface of violent seas. The only limitation to their power was that they were not the original source of all these miracles. They derived their power from Evil. In order to lead a man astray, he was first made to renounce his faith in God and all the noble and virtuous qualities with which he is endowed by the Divine Being. It is only then that the witches could make him their victim by their charms. These were common beliefs among the Elizabethan people. There are cases on record in which some old women were tried and burnt for practising witchcraft. Dr. Samuel Johnson in his writing refers to the trial of witches under Queen Elizabeth. Professor Brandes, writing about the superstitions of the 17th century, says that people in that age believed in many types of other spirits who had power to disturb the order of nature, produce storms in land as well as in sea and could bring calamities and even death. They could disseminate plague and famine as well. Describing their appearances, the Professor says that they were old, wrinkled women, who brewed all kinds of frightful enormities and that the law stood against them with fire and sword. In 1558, Bishop Jewel appealed to Elizabeth to take strong measures against wizards and witches and this provides us with a strong testimony about the superstitions of those days. King James has been described as a most prominent champion of superstitions. He tried 200 witches who were burnt as a punishment for raising a storm which prevented James's bride from crossing to Scotland. Brandes declares, "Many of them confessed to having ridden through the air on broomsticks or invisible chariots drawn by snails, and admitted that they were able to make themselves invisible." It is a matter of amazement that although these witches were equipped with such miraculous power, they did not make use of them when they were tried and were sentenced to death by fire.

Shakespearean Witches. Having examined the popular conception of witches we may now easily direct

our study towards Shakespeare's witches in particular and examine how far they are in line with the contemporary superstitions and beliefs. In their hideous appearance and evil powers and influence, Shakespearean witches do not differ much from the witches of conventional conception. As we know through our study of *Macbeth*, Shakespeare's witches are wild in their attire, withered in their bodies and are bearded. They have choppy fingers and lips. They do not look like inhabitants of the earth. Their power of seeing through the mysteries is so great that they may reveal the secret as to which grain will grow and which will not. They can even look into the seeds of time. They have power to disturb the atmosphere of nature and raise a storm in any quarter of the earth. Like the witches of his age, Shakespearean witches are always active to do evil. They take pleasure in malicious action. They may sail in an impossible vessel like a sieve in the shape of a rat without a tail. They can produce charms, have separate attendant spirits like Graymalkin, Paddock, etc., who are allotted various functions by them.

Shakespeare's Treatment of the Supernatural. Shakespeare handles the popular tradition about the supernatural in his own peculiar way, and therefore his witches, though in some aspects similar to the popular conception are, however, different from them in many ways. Coleridge remarks, "the weird sisters are as daring a creation of Shakespeare as is Ariel and Caliban—Fates. They are wholly different from any representative of the witches in the contemporary writers, and yet presented a sufficient external resemblance to the creatures of vulgar prejudice to act immediately on the audience. Their character consists in the imaginative disconnected from the good; they are the shadowy, obscure and fearfully anomalous of physical nature, to lawless of human nature —elemental avengers without sex or kin." Thus the witches in Macbeth stand distinct from the witches of the popular conception in their aspect of being not the definite incarnation of Evil. The horror which is aroused

by their appearance is vague and impalpable. They appear to be watching us with their hooded eyes. They are the instruments and power of Evil. They draw men to ruin and destruction through their evil powers. Although their predictions are true in insignificant things, but so far as matters of deepest significance are concerned, they betray man. Professer Dowden points out that the witches in *Macbeth* are like "terrible old women of Michael Angelo, who spin the destinies of men." Some critics remark that they are simply powers of evil leading men to ruin and, therefore, they cannot be said to belong to a particular age. Such powers excite men to do evil even today. They are wicked desires urging us to evil ways. When these desires are symbolically personified, they cannot be represented in an agreeable shape. They must look hideous like the witches in *Macbeth*.

The Role of Witches in Macbeth. The foremost function of witches in *Macbeth* is to contribute to the atmosphere of the play. While on the one hand it cannot be claimed that the witches exercise a perfect control over the deeds of Macbeth, on the other it cannot also be contended that the witches do not exercise any influence on him at all. Obviously Macbeth is not powerless in their hands as the ancient characters in Greek plays were in the hands of gods and goddesses. According to some critics, the witches and their prophecies are only symbolic representations of thoughts and desires lying slumbered in Macbeth's heart. His ambitions hitherto inactive rise into activity through his glorious success in the battle-field. The logical implication of this line of argument is that as Macbeth has free scope to act, therefore he cannot be allowed an exemption from the guilt merely on the pretext that he has been under the influence of the supernatural. Some critics maintain that the witches appearing in Macbeth are not Fates like those of Greek Tragedies. Their function is of fanning up the evil which is hiding in Macbeth's heart. This may be proved through an illustration. As there is no seed of evil in Banquo's heart, the predictions of the witches do not

make any deep impression on his mind. They stir up Macbeth because ambition lies asleep in his heart. The frailty is, therefore, there and the function of the supernatural is to fan the fire. The Weird Sisters may, therefore, be interpreted as personified forces of disorders, disintegration and conflict.

Witches in Critics' Eyes. Various critics have tried to probe into the character, nature and significance of the so-called Weird Sisters. Shakespeare himself gave no interpretation or explanation of their significance, character, range of influence, etc. According to Quiller-Couch "Shakespeare, as a workman, purposely left vague the extent of their influence ; and Macbeth's own guilty promptings, his own acceptance of the hallucinations, contribute to persuade him." Thus, in this critic's opinion, they are symbols of Macbeth's guilty ambitions. In their essence they are evil and draw all evil things to themselves. There was an evil in Macbeth's mind and this evil finds reflection in the evil gathered round the character of the witches. In this way there is a bond of unholy kinship among them. Again, the witches cannot be said to be the original tempters of Macbeth—Macbeth's reaction to the predictions and prophesies of the witches, his letter to his wife, and his various soliloquies as well as speeches provide enough proof of this fact. Macbeth himself must have toyed with the idea of getting the crown by hook or by crook in order to satisfy his ambitions. So the witches cannot be said to exercise complete control over the course of human action. According to Dowden, these witches are not merely "loathsome hags of popular superstition." They are grotesque no doubt but at the same time they are sublime. We find them tingling in every fibre with evil energy. Their malignity is unexhaustible. Thus, in Dowden's opinion, they are much more than mere embodiments of inward temptations. They may be said to be the instruments of vice which exists around us. As to the source of Shakespeare's inspiration in respect of the witches, Professor Bradley points out that Shakespeare took materials for shaping the character

of the witches from the popular ideas spreading round him among the people about witchcraft. He was also inspired probably from ideas contained in books like Scott's *Discovery*. What Shakespeare did was to select and to improve this material. He rejected what looked ridiculous and rehandled it in an artistic manner, introducing various devices to heighten the effect of the supernatural in such a way that he made the instruments of fear, horror and mysterious attraction. According to Bradley, the witches are not goddesses or Fates. They are not even supernatural beings in his opinion. He claims that they are only old women poorly attired in ragged clothes. They are skinny and hideous. Their hearts are full of vulgar spite. As it was popularly believed, such old women often received certain supernatural powers from evil spirits. They can make the rain fall in hail, and raise tempests, etc. They can assume invisible shapes and vanish in the air whenever they like. They keep attendant devils and spirits in the shape of toads and cats around them. They have power to transfer corn in the blade from one place to another. Above all, they may foresee and foreshow things of the future and may reveal some of the hidden secrets. Bradley is of the opinion that the type of witches which Shakespeare presents in *Macbeth* are not even in Scott. He must have read something about them in Holinshed who describes some women meeting with Macbeth as either 'weird sisters, goddesses of Destiny, nymphs, or fairies.' This is the only hint contained in Holinshed, but such a hint was insufficient. If Shakespeare had produced the witches in the crude form as referred by Holinshed, his audience would have never taken any interest in them. The conclusion which Bradley draws is that Shakespeare was not much indebted to Holinshed for the use of the idea of the witches. He only borrowed the phrase 'Weird Sisters'. The Weird Sisters are in the opinion of some critics personified forces of disorder; disintegration and conflict. Their aim is to wreck the state of man. Their function is only to bring to the surface the dormant emotions and ambitions lying in

the heart of Macbeth. They only fan the fire and set the story in motion.

DRAMATIC WORKMANSHIP IN MACBETH

Macbeth is a good model of Shakespeare's dramatic workmanship. It is typical in its technique and demands our closer examination from more than one standpoint. We will study various aspects of Shakespeare's craftsmanship and technique in *Macbeth.*

1. **The Edifice.** We know that "a good plot is that sure edifice which slowly rises out of the interplay of circumstances and temperaments on circumstance, within the enclosing atmosphere of an idea." For Shakespeare a human being is itself a best plot. He presents before us a situation with its effect on characters and the reactions of the characters to the situation. All this is within the atmosphere of an idea. A play of Shakespeare's conception should have a theme, and every scheme, even every word, should contribute something to the exposition of the theme, as integral parts of an organic and artistie unity. The plot construction of *Macbeth* falls true to the principles enunciated above. The central theme of the play is the inherent ambition of Macbeth. This theme is developed by incidents, characters and scenes which contribute to the fuller exposition of the plot. The appearance of the witches in the first scene and then their meeting with Macbeth invites our attention to be concentrated on the conflict which has to rise by the action and reaction between the natural and the supernatural. Then the play proceeds with great swiftness through various logical complexities and complications. Every further action is rooted in the preceding. The play concludes in tragic doom of the main character who is at once a hero and villian—a brave and courageous general and an ambitious murderer, tyrant and criminal. Thus the plot develops and concludes unfolding the theme with its effects on characters and corresponding reactions of characters on the main action of the play.

2. **Climax.** The climax in *Macbeth* develops logically and naturally. It is a kind of sure pointing forward and acceleration from the beginning. We feed the end coming from the very first Act and when that end comes, it is terrible, piteous and heart-rending to an extreme degree. Shakespeare does not allow the side characters to distract our attention from the leading personage of Macbeth. We follow the fortunes of this one personage with breathless interest to his pre-destined close. Shakespeare's climax is not reached through adaptation of artificial devices but in the proper course of the development of the plot. It gathers force from every word, incident, character and scene. When climax comes we feel that the turning point has come and the action begins to move downwards in a slanting manner.

3. **Tragic Conclusion.** The conclusion in Shakespeare's tragedies are terrible and highly piteous. He brings his plays to a conclusion with great skill and caution. In *Macbeth*, we find an intense atmosphere of horror and pity intensifying itself into a bloody conclusion. Generally the death occurring at the conclusion is very tragic like that of Macbeth. Our sense of justice is satisfied by Shakespeare's tragic conclusions. The final punishment is awarded in such a way that our pity and sympathy is automatically aroused. This purpose is achieved by Shakespeare due to his consummate art.

4. **The Suspense.** In *Macbeth* our interest lies in tragic consequence which may be said to be foreseen and yet we are held in suspense through the utilization of the element of doubt. From the very beginning up to the close of the play our doubts continue to develop. Even when Birnam Wood begins to move, we believe like Macbeth himself that no person born of woman will be able to cause any injury to his person in any way because the witches whose other predictions were exactly fulfilled, had given an assurance to Macbeth on this point. This suspense breaks only when Macduff discloses to him that he "was from his mother's womb untimely ripped," but that is the very end of the play itself. So suspense is maintained to the last.

5. Symbolic Action. In a moment of high tension, Shakespeare uses artistic and skilful devices to show the agitated feelings of characters. The illusion of the dagger, Banquo's ghost, etc., are a few good examples. *Macbeth* is full of such touches. These symbolic actions are more eloquent than words. As a matter of fact, it will be correct to claim that no words, however powerful they may be, can bring to the surface the inner feelings in a more artistic way than such symbolic actions. The sleep-walking scene is also symbolic. It depicts the intense feelings of Lady Macbeth in whose mind the impression of blood was so deeply engrossed that it could not be expressed in any other way more significant and more impressive than which has been adopted by Shakespeare.

6. Two Spheres. From the point of view of dramatic workmanship Macbeth may be divided into two distinct spheres (1) the supernatural ; (2) the natural. The world of the Weird Sisters is a supernatural one. The witches seem to enter the action from outside. When once they are in they appear to influence the whole course of action. Macbeth meets them twice and both the occasions form the turning points of his career. The first time when the witches appear to him they incite him to guilt while the second time they lead him to retribution.

7. Two Groups. Snider divides the natural world into two distinct groups. In the first category he places Banquo, Macbeth and his Lady, the actions of whom are determined by the Weird Sisters either directly or indirectly. So far as Banquo is concerned he continually resists the temptations to which the witches had tried to draw him. Lady Macbeth yields to the influence of the Weird Sisters. Macbeth, in his relations to the external powers of the supernatural, continues to fluctuate for sometime but when his resisting power is subdued, be begins to yield. In the second category Snider places Duncan and other subsidiary characters appearing in the play. They do not come in contact with the witches. The predictions of the Weird Sisters do not directly influence them. The actions of this group are influenced by the first group of the

natural world. This analysis proves that the supernatural element works through the entire play. The influence which is directly received by Macbeth, Banquo and Lady Macbeth is transmitted to Duncan, Macduff, Fleance, etc. The last group reacts against the first. It is the last group which brings about restoration and punishment of the usurper.

8. **Double Guilt.** According to Snider Shakespeare has not introduced double guilt in this play and therefore the fate of one set of characters is motived. He sees no justification for the death of Duncan, Banquo and Macduff's family on the ground of their own deeds. This set has commited no ethical violation for which they could be held liable to death. They have been involved in catastrophe in spite of their innocence. The Weird Sisters are the instruments of destiny. They obstruct Macbeth's way by their mighty force. The whole play revolves round the ambition of Macbeth and this ambition is incited by the supernatural element.

9. **Simplest and Swiftest.** In Arthur Symons' opinion Macbeth is simplest in its outline. In its action it is swiftest. We find ourselves in the centre of the theme even in the first scene. As soon as Macbeth speaks in ambiguous terms we get ourselves prepared for a strange happening. The events rush to the end with increasing speed and there is not a single occasion where the story might have turned aside from the main theme.

10. **Interest Narrowed.** Macbeth and Lady Macbeth fill the stage throughout the play and our interest is continually concentrated upon their doings. All the subsidiary characters have been only sketched. Thus the interest of the play has been narrowed down. The subsidiary characters vanish from our memory as soon as they go off the stage. The action passes through conflict, and this conflict is between the good and better natures of two persons only,

11. Dramatic Irony in Macbeth. Shakespeare gives fine artistic touches of irony in *Macbeth* to heighten the effect. This aspect needs special examination from the dramatic point of view. As we know, irony is created by a visible contrast between what is actually uttered on the stage and what is already understood by the audience through various suggestions. It is, in other words the realisation by the audience of that which is concealed from the characters appearing on the stage. The dramatic personages utter truth unconsciously and do not realise the inner significance of their speech.

12. Characteristic Feature. As *Macbeth* significantly reminds us of Destiny due to the presence of the supernatural or superhuman powers, a dramatic irony is naturally a characteristic feature throughout the movement of action. Characters do often use words which, besides the obvious meaning, have a second meaning in relation to what will happen later. If the speaker is aware of this second meaning he is consciously ironical ; but the dramatic effect is more striking where he is not, for it then seems as if the words were put into his mouth by a power outside himself. This device creates irony and it has been frequently used by Shakespeare in *Macbeth*.

13. Examples. Many examples of irony may be quoted from this play but we cite only some of them. There is irony, for instance, in Duncan's congratulations to Macbeth and condemnation of the Thane of Cawdor. In this case we know that Macbeth is ambitious and this fact is not known to Duncan who, out of ignorance, pays him glorious tributes taking him to be a gentleman in whom he could have an absolute trust. We, however, feel the irony of the situation because we know the inner feelings of Macbeth's heart. Again there is a deep touch of irony in Duncan's compliments to Lady Macbeth. He supposes her to be the most kind hostess, while we know that it is she who is secretly planning to remove the king from her husband's way by hook or by crook. Then, again, the Porter's humorous remarks are dipped in irony. He supposes himself to be

the Portor of Hell Gate and does not know that he is unconsciously uttering the truth. We know that a crime is being committed within the castle of which the jolly porter is unaware. In the curses of the Weird Sisters, by Macbeth, there is a touch of irony because while so condemning all those who believe the supernatural powers, he forgets that he has been deceived by them.

14. Double-Dealing. Moulton sees a sort of double-dealing in destiny itself, whose operations are tinctured with irony. He points out that mockery lies in the fact that what appears to check the power of destiny turns out to be the means which destiny chooses to fulfil itself. As soon as the witches promise the rise of Macbeth, several obstacles appear in his way. One of them is the proclamation of Malcolm as heir-apparent, another is the escape of the two princes from the clutches of Macbeth. These appear to be obstacles, but in the course of events prove to be the means of the fulfilment of the promise of the witches—it is due to the flight of the princes that Macbeth finds chance of ascending the throne as Duncan's successor. Again, the apparitions predict Macbeth against Macduff. The result is that Macbeth slaughters his whole family in order to root out the danger completely but his act becomes the very cause of the retribution. In the stage of the fall of action too we thus see the element of mockery and irony working actively throughout. The original promise of the witches and the later promise of apparitions seems to be obstructed but the drawbacks themselves contribute to the fulfilment of the destiny.

15. Dramatic Relief in ***Macbeth*****.** By dramatic relief we understand a sudden change in emotional interest. It provides relaxation and diversion through the introduction of new tones of passion and by providing a variety through alteration of serious passions into the light one.

16. Light and Shade. In *Macbeth*, the touches of light and shade are artistic. They are also necessary because the play moves with terrible rapidity from one tragic event to

another and our imagination is engaged inserious emotional shocks. These impressions come in quick succession and do not let us enjoy a relief. It is, therefore, essential that dramatic relief is provided so that we may find breathing space.

17. A Wrong Supposition. It is wrong to suppose that such a relief may injure the tragic atmosphere of a play. The fact is that such changes in tone heighten the tragic impressions by the sense of contrast and at the same time relieve the audience from emotional strain.

18. Two Categories. Dramatic relief in *Macbeth* may be divided into two categories : (**1**) major ; (**2**) minor. In the first category, we may put the Porter Scene, while in the second we may place the predictions and incantations of the witches, Lady Macduff's domestic scene, the Doctor Scene, the remarks about the divine powers of the English King and several other remarks of the same nature. These touches provide relief in greater or lesser degree from time to time in *Macbeth*.

19. The Porter Scene. The Porter Scene is unique in the whole play. Uptil now we were engaged in witnessing the serious conflict of Macbeth's soul. Lady Macbeth's wild imagery struck us with awe. The appearance of the blood-daubed dagger created in us the feeling of horror. Then was committed the crime itself. It was now very necessary to enjoy some moments in order to relax the strain caused by such serious happenings. The jolly Porter, by his humorous comments as well as conduct, provides such relief. He admits peple knocking at the door with reluctance. He supposes himself to be the porter of Hell Gate and admits the visitors one by one at his own leisure. The emotion which had been keyed up to the highest pitch temporarily breaks down and we have a time to breath freely. The jests and jokes of the jolly porter who keeps the nobles standing outside in the storm till he has comfortably finished his humorous comments is farcical in its nature and works as a single ray of common daylight.

20. Criticism. Some critics, however, criticise the jesting and joking as being out of place at a time a gruesome crime is being committed. They criticise it on the ground that it injures the tragic setting of the play. This criticism is not reasonable. Shakespeare being a dramatic artist knew that lighter scene to relieve the emotional strain from the mind of the audience may provide relief on one hand and may heighten the tragic tone on the other.

21. Lady Macduff's Domestic Scene. Among the dramatic relief of the second category, Lady Macduff's domestic scene stands impressive. Her talk with her little son gives us further relief. It is a scene of sweetness which at the same time heightens the effect of the crime committed later. Thus by its tenderness, it provides relief while by the savage slaughter of the whole family of innocent children it enhances the effect of the crime. The glimpse into Macduff's domestic life gives us a brief escape from the scenes of huge sins and sufferings.

22. Minor Touches. Besides that the pleasant description of Macbeth's castle where the air recommends itself to our gentler senses with its nimbleness and where the temple-haunting martlets build their nests, gives us relief. Similarly, the appearance of the messenger in the final scene and the entry of the doctor in Act IV are relieving. The incantations of the witches in course of which we hear the magical charms recited along with the dance of the witches round the cauldron are full of relief. The reference to the divine powers of the English King and a lot of other minor touches contribute to the sense of relaxation and relief.

23. Pessimism in Macbeth. As we know, Shakespeare wrote *Macbeth* when he was 'in the depths.' It was a period of gloom. He devoted himself to exhibit the darker aspects of man's life. We find man at odds with Fate. He is driven from woe to woe due to his sins which he commits due to his own weakness and due to pressure of outward

circumstances. We need not trace whether this change in Shakespeare's tone crept into the plays due to his personal losses, misery and unhappiness, because such findings will be based on mere conjecture and guess-work. One fact which we should remember is that light-heartedness which we mark in Shakespeare's earlier plays has vanished. He set himself for about eight or nine years to analyse the triumphant evil. Laughter died away upon his lips and he devoted himself to trace the war between man and destiny. We find brute in man trampling upon the good. In the themes tackled by Shakespeare during this period, we find man in the face of cruel and relentless forces. It should not be supposed, however, that he falls a target to the odds of Fate alone. The fact is that man comes to grief due to his own mistakes and crimes. Anyhow, Shakespeare's outlook on life seems to be pessimistic in spite of the fact that he concludes *Macbeth* with a note of joy and promise of bright things in future. One point which needs emphasis is that in spite of gloom, Shakespeare does not leave us crushed or altogether pessimistic. Although *Macbeth* may be held to be a villain due to his deeds, he too realises new beauty in existence.

24. Flattening of Character in *Macbeth* Shakespeare has delineated the minor characters in *Macbeth* and has brought them on a level far inferior to that were Macbeth and Lady Macbeth stand. In this respect, *Macbeth* is unique. In Bradley's opinion Shakespeare has flattened all the minor characters because he "was taking good cure that not one of these puppets should engage our attention and interest to compete in it for one moment with two great figures of guilt" in whom he wanted us to keep deeply absorbed. In respect of this flattening *Macbeth* has a close resemblance to Greek tragedies. According to Quiller-Couch, Shakespeare has flattened every other character except Macbeth and Lady Macbeth deliberately because he wants to keep us interested in only these two. The porter and Banquo no doubt show signs of coming alive, but they do not engage our attention for too long a time. Even the characters

of Duncan and Banquo do not produce the sense of unique personalities. In short, all the minor characters, including the witches, serve as agents to the main action which revolves round the two figures of Macbeth and his lady, which has heen built up on a grand style.

25. Classical Element in Macbeth. Critics hold *Macbeth* as one of the most classical of Shakespeare's plays, but the point whether Shakespeare was influenced by Greek conventions more than Roman is a bit controversial. There is an affinity, no doubt, between this great tragedy and the classical tragedies of ancient Greek masters like Aeschylus and Sophocles, but the point raised by Bradley that Shakespeare is indebted to Seneca is not baseless. It possesses the following classical elements :—

26. Greek Conception. But before everything else we must know what was the ancient conception of tragedy inherited by Shakespeare and how far he has transported it in the action and characterisation of *Macbeth*. We already know that Aristotle in his book *Poetics* from which the main principles of dramatic theory and criticism have been derived, defines tragedy thus. "*Tradegy is the representation of an action, which is serious, complete, and of a certain limited length, expressed in speech made beautiful in different ways in different parts of the play, (e.g., verse song, prose, etc.) ; it is acted, not merely narrated ; and by exciting pity and fear provides a proper purgation of these emotions.*" Now although Shakespeare paid attention neither to the unities laid down by the Greek masters, nor to any other rules of classical art, *Macbeth* does, anyhow, approach more nearly to a Greek conception of tragedy in its exclusions of humour, its introduction of fury or spirit of revenge, its unfigurative strength of diction, and its statuesque art than any other of his tragedies. There is none of the exuberance of wisdom and poetry, none of the overflow of thought and character, none of the tragic humour that we find in *H mlet* and *Lear*. We see Shakespeare holding the reign upon his imagination. His passion never overcomes him

to pull him down to a point whence he may not contemplate all existence and its deeper problem. We know also that, according to Aristotle, the hero of a tragedy should neither he eminently virtuous or just nor involved in artificial misfortunes to be deliberately portrayed as vice or villain. He must have some flaw or human frailty in his character itself. Shakespeare's *Macbeth* comes a bit closer to this Greek conception because like Greek tragedy the tragic implications in *Macbeth* arise from the loopholes in the character ot the principal person. In Greek Tragedy Destiny eclipses and over-powers the tragic character but in *Macbeth* the whole action revolves round the figure of the principal character. The role played by Fate is not so over-shadowing as it is in Greek Tragedies. A Shakespearean play becomes a tragedy because of the inborn frailty referred above. *The character is thus itself the destiny.* Macbeth is neither eminently virtuous nor vicious but has a fatal weakness in his character. There is no extraordinary quality in the hero except that there is an intensification of one of the factors in his character to such an extent that he is automatically raised above the other ordinary characters. Macbeth's character is built on a grand scale. Ambition in the case of the hero attains a terrible force. The conflict in which he engages acquires a magnitude which stirs sympathy and pity as well as admiration and terror. His tragic trait lifts him up to his greatness and throws him down to his ruin. Macbeth errs by action and ambition. His errors associate with other causes to push him to his destruction. To Aristotle plot was most important but in *Macbeth* character is more important than plot. Although the circumstances, Destiny or Fate, also influence the action and character but they are not so predominant as in Greek models. So *Macbeth* is not strictly raised on all the laws laid down by Greek masters. It has only a few things in common with the Greek tragedies and they have been already enumerated above. In Professor Bradley's opinion Shakespeare has received much influence from the Roman conception of tragedy rather than the Greek. He finds close resemblance between *Macbeth* and Senecan tragedy in the basic nature of the supernatural, the ghost and

dialogue, etc. One point is, however, indisputable and it is that *Macbeth* is not a play of Destiny in the Greek sense: it is a tragedy of character.

27. **Greek Aspects.** Greek classical influence over *Macbeth* may be proved through many examples. Some of them are as follows: (1) Characters of principal figures—Macbeth and Lady Macbeth—have been magnified and subsidiary characters have been flattened. (2) It is haunted by a sense of fatality. (3) The cycle of retribution revolves as soon as the crime is committed. (4) Agents of retribution are nothing in themselves. (5) All acts of bloodshed are performed off stage. (6) The element of irony is of the nature of the tragedies of Sophocles—a Greek classical master. (7) The character of Lady Macbeth has close resemblance with that of Clytemnestra built up by another classical master named Aeschylus. (8) It is simplest in outline. (9) In action it is swiftest. All these characteristics remind scholars of the great ancient classics in drama. According to Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch, an enthusiastic scholar named Richard Moulton set himself the task of remodelling *Macbeth* on a classical model and succeeded in transforming it into a purely classical work without destroying the essence of the play. This fact may or may not be correct but it goes a long way to prove one point that of all the plays of Shakespeare, *Macbeth* possesses the classical element to a very high degree.

28. **Roman Elements.** In Bradley's opinion, Shakespeare seems to be indebted to Senecan tragedies rather than the Greek. The Professor does not claim that Shakespeare deliberately produced this play on a classical model. What he contends is only that the Senecan manner of treating a bloody story might have appealed to Shakespeare when he was writing *Macbeth*. Professor Bradley draws the following points of resemblance between *Macbeth* and the Senecan tragedy:—(1) Like Seneca's witches, the witches in *Macbeth* are romantic in their nature—perhaps Shakespeare was influenced by Seneca's Medea and Hercules Octaeus. (2) The incantations in *Macbeth* remind us of Medea's preparations. (3) Like Seneca's ghost, the ghost

of Banquo is romantic. In style of the dialogue occasionally Shakespeare seems to be influenced by Seneca. In *Macbeth*, Bradley finds close resemblance and influences of Seneca. One classical element, according to Professor Bradley, is that Shakespeare laid great emphasis on some characters—he concentrated the whole interest on important personages appearing in the play, and flattened the rest in more or less degree.

29. Destiny. *Macbeth* has one characteristic in a very much more marked degree than any other of Shakespeare's plays—in the way in which it is pervaded by the notion of Destiny. Some such effect acompanies almost of necessity any serious introduction of the Weird Sisters but neither in *Julius Caesar* nor in *Hamlet* is the idea present with anything like the same force as in *Macbeth*. The whole of the supernatural machinery is utilized by Shakespeare to create terror and satisfy the contemporary superstition. One fact, however, which needs emphasis is that we are obliged to think that if the over-ruling powers of supernatural elements, wish so, anything normal may become abnormal, or at least deviate from normal. This spoils the whole show. The prime cause of a tragedy is the flow of the character no doubt, but some critics still hold that character is not the cause of tragedy. They argue that factors like destiny cast a deep shadow and influence on the course of action to make it what it is—a tragedy. Such critics forget that while in the Greek tragedy, ruin arises from 'a blast of the envy of God,' in Shakespearean tragedy destiny is only subsidiary. It has not been allotted so important a role as we find in Greek tragedy. It is present there but is not armed with the powers which the Greeks had entrusted to it. The controversy of the role of destiny and character may be closed up by the remark that Shakespearean tragedy is both the tragedy of character and destiny. This remark suits accurately the play *Macbeth* in which destiny and environment do unfortunately combine to make the weakness of Macbeth the very one which is most deadly to him. This statement is, however, conditioned. Shakespeare's heroes have the choice between right and wrong in the beginning,

SHAKESPEARE'S STYLE IN MACBETH

Shakespeare's style of writing in *Macbeth*—handling of prose and verse—needs special consideration.

Periods. We know that when he set himself to writing his earlier plays, his style was full of puns, verbal conceits and other literary devices, which are absent in his later plays. The enormous number of similes and other poetic expressions lessen themselves as he marches forward in the dramatic field. It seems as if in his later plays he has no time to indulge in the tricks referred to above. His inclination to draw out his metaphors to their full length vanishes. Formerly he used to depend on words more than on ideas. In the middle period of his career, the balance between words and ideas seems to be even. In the final period, however, ideas outgrow the language and the style takes a new turn. According to some critics, Shakespeare's thoughts seems to become too full, too intense for expression in his later days.

Macbeth. In *Macbeth* we find ruggedness, severity and grandeur, befitting the theme. The conflict of the human soul required such medium of expression. The play rushes with great swiftness and to maintain the dignity of impression under fever heat and rush of emotions, a peculiar force and power of language is required. An analytical examination of the play will reveal that action moves through variance, vividness and magnitude of imagery. Extraordinary passions are dealt with by Shakespeare through their intricate passage of development. The deep slumbering emotion in the heart of man have to be brought on the surface. He is not dealing with an ordinary theme like love and jealousy or avarice or despair, in *Macbeth*. We find him sorting out the threads of complicated emotions. He is at work with something great in his hand. The psychology of ruthless crimes, the agonies to which the characters are subjected and a lot of other things of similar nature required creative genius.

At the Height. In *Macbeth* we find Shakespeare at the height of his style. There is no doubt that sometimes

the expressions used by Shakespeare in this play appear to be ambiguous and complicated. Occasionally we find and come across codensed phrases, crowded metaphors and even bombast, but the creative genius of Shakespeare is at all times stirring horror. It transcends the limits of ordinary art. It is in a way an invention.

Transition. Some critics have pointed out that *Macbeth* was written by Shakespeare in a period when his style was in transition. If we examine his style from *Hamlet* to *Macbeth,* we find a steady change in versification and gradual transition in his general style of writing. During this period his style in emotional passages rises to its height. It continues to gather round it grandeur. Sometimes it seems to become wilder, other times it looks to be more swelling. We mark a lot of other changes too. On certain occasions his style becomes concentrated, rapid, varied, less regular and twisted. In *Macbeth* we find Shakespeare using a language which has peculiar compression, pregnancy, energy and even violence. In *Hamlet* Shakespeare's style was marked by harmonious grace and even flow, but in *Macbeth* these elements have vanished.

Consummate Style. *Macbeth* may be counted as one among Shakespeare's plays which may be said to contain a wealth of consummate style. This is the main reason why this play is so impressive. Sometimes, Shakespeare's style in this play becomes thundering, other times mysterious. It is the style with all its peculiarities which has made *Macbeth* a tremendous tragedy of Shakespeare.

AN ASSESSMENT OF THE GREATNESS OF MACBETH

Grieson. In the opinion of H. C. Grieson, *Macbeth* is not the greatest of Shakespeare's tragedies. The critic claims that this play is "neither so pitiful as *Othelllo* nor so awe-inspiring as *Lear* ; but it is by its comparative simplicity one of the most impressive and instructive." Continuing further, the critic remarks, "Judged from the moral point of view as our reasons compel us to judge him, a point of view from which Macbeth is never able

to emancipate himself, like Iago or Richard III........ Macbeth is condemned ; we contemplate his fate with a moral approval which we certainly do not feel in the case or Othello or Lear." Explaining the standard of judging a tragedy, the critic says, "If we present our hero as being and feeling himself to be a puppet in the hands of Fate, we weaken the tragic effect. The last drop of bitterness in the cup of the tragic hero is to realize that his own folly or guilt has brought his destruction." Going into details, Grieson says, "From both the points of wiew from which we contemplate a tragic event, the moral culpability, the error of the hero counts for much. Aristotle pronounces the everthrow of a bad man as no tragedy at all. We recognize the guilt of Macbeth, the radical error of his will, but we recognize also how frail a thing a human will is, beset by passion and temptation and illusion. We see evil born of the very capacity for good. There is something in Macbeth and Lady Macbeth even in their errors that bespeaks greatness of soul more clearly than the humdrum, half-timid honesty of Banquo or the narrow and hard virtue of Macduff ; and our judgment of moral approval and disapproval is observed in and transcended by a sense of the beauty and the mystery of these great human souls, their conflicts and their defeats ; the beauty and the mystery of human life."

Ridley. Mr. Ridley, commenting upon *Mecbeth* as a tragedy, remarks that "Macbeth forfeits one by one all claims of our admiration which at the outset he possessed, except indeed his poetic imagination ; he dies with the snarl of a trapped animal on his lips" with the result that the play is the least successful of all the tragedies. It has brilliant theatrical moments but the level is not well maintained, and towards the end it is within measurable distance of being tedious.

"As *it* is obvious, a tragedy requires many factors. If a play has an unhappy ending, it may not be termed as a tragedy in the strict sense. A story cannot be tragic merely because it deals with the sufferings, trials and tribulations of the hero or the main character. In a tragedy, there must

be a conflict of man with circumstances. It must stir in us emotions of sympathy and terror. If we consider *Macbeth* as a tragedy from the viewpoint stated above, we find that a young and brave soldier who has ability of leadership along with many other qualities of character comes to his doom in the course of the development of the plot. A stage comes when the hero falls into temptation incited by the witches ; he is overtaken by personal ambitions. At that stage, too, our hearts are filled with sympathy for him. Although his increasing ambition lessens our pity for him yet as the conflict within his soul intensifies, our interest rises up. The series of crimes in which we see Macbeth involved appear to have arisen from the abnormal state of his mind, and on that ground too we feel pity and sympathy for him. When at the height of mental conflict, he uses majestic diction our pity for him is further increased. The excellence of Shakespeare's art lies in the fact that although Macbeth plays a treacherous role and walks through blood and unfair means to the throne, our sympathy for him does not dissipate. There is a note of hope at the end of the play. The hope of bright days to come shines forth from amidst the impressions of horror and pity. The world and life is wretched for Macbeth. He is tired of them. At the height of Macbeth's mental conflict we are led to feel that the only solution of his struggle is death."

Verity. "I regard Macbeth, upon the whole, as the greatest treasure of our dramatic literature," says W. A. Verity. "We may look as Britons at Greek sculpture, and at Italian paintings, with a humble consciousness that our native art has never reached their perfection ; but in the drama we can confront Aeschylus himself with Shakespeare ; and of all modern theatres, ours alone can compete with the Greek in the unborrowed nativeness and sublimity of its superstition. In the grandeur of tragedy *Macbeth* has no parallel, till we go back to the Prometheus and the Furies of the Attic stage. I could even produce, if it were not digressing too far from my subject, innumerable instances of striking similarity between the metaphorical mintage of Shakespeare's and of Aeschylus's style,

—a similarity, both in beauty and in the fault of excess, that unless the contrary had been proved, would lead me to suspect our great dramatist to have been a studious Greek scholar. But their resemblance arose from the consanguinity of nature. In one respect, the tragedy of *Macbeth* always reminds me of Aeschylus's poetry. It has scenes and conceptions absolutely too bold for representation. What stage could do justice to Aeschylus, when the Titan Prometheus makes his appeal to the elements; and when the hammer is heard in the Scythian Desert that rivets his chains? Or when the Ghost of Clytemnestra rushes into Apollo's temple, and rouses the sleeping Furies? I wish to imagine these scenes: I should be sorry to see the action of them attempted. In like manner, there are parts of *Macbeth* which I delight to read much more than to see in the theatre......Nevertheless, I feel no inconsistency in reverting from these remarks to my first assertion, that all in all, *Macbeth* is our great possession in dramatic poetry."

Gerzinus. The main impressions left by the play stand out clearly in Gervinus's summary: "This tragedy has ever been regarded and criticised with distinguishing preference among Shakespeare's works; our own *Schiller* reproduced it, *Schlegel* spoke of it with enthusiasm, *Drake* called it 'the greatest effort of our author's genius, and the most sublime and impressive drama which the world has ever beheld.' It has also obtained favour above the other plays of Shakespeare in lands peopled by other than the Teutonic race, either from its felt or perceived resemblance to ancient tragedy, or from its unity of design and the simple progress of its development, or from its distinct characterisation, in which the poet has employed less mystery than usual; most of all, indeed, from its pictorial charm and poetic colouring. *Macbeth* stands forth uniquely pre-eminent in the splendour of poetic and picturesque diction and in the living representation of persons, times, and places. *Schlegel* perceived the vigorous heroic age of the North depicted in it with powerful touches, the generations of an iron time, whose virtue is bravery. How 'grandly do the mighty forms rise, how naturally do they

move in a heroic style.' Locally, we are transported into the Highlands of Scotland, where everything appears tinged with superstition, full of tangible intercommunion with the supernatural.

"This mastery over the general representation of time and place is rivalled by the picture of single circumstances and situations. *Reynolds* justly admired that the description of the Martlet's resort to Macbeth's dwelling as a charming image of repose, following by way of contrast the lively picture of the fight? More justly still has praise been always lavished on the powerful representation of the horrible in that night wandering of Lady Macbeth, in the banquet scene, and in the dismal creation of the Weird Sisters. And far above all this is the speaking truth of the scenes at the murder of Duncan, which produce a power effect even in the most imperfect representaion. The fearful whispered conference, in the horrible dimness of which the pair arrange and complete their atrocious project ; the heart-rending portraiture of Macbeth's state of mind at the deed itself ; the uneasy half-waking condition of the sacrificed attendants, one of whom dreams on the evening feast, the other, in paralysed consciousness, seems to anticipate the impending atrocity; lastly, the external terrors of night, presenting a foreboding contrast to the tumult of merriment over the yawning graves ; all this is so perfectly natural, and wrought to such powerful effect with so little art, that it would be difficult to find its equal in the poetry of any age."

IMPORTANT QUESTIONNAIRE

The answers to the important University questions posed here in this Questionnaire may be found in Section IV under "A Critical Survey of Macbeth." The students are advised to prepare themselves thoroughly in the light of these questions.

● 'The date of composition of *Macbeth* is, even after all researches, a subject of controversy.' How far do you agree with the above contention ? Give the authentic date of composition of *Macbeth* with full proof of your claim.

- Write a note on the sources of *Macbeth*.
- "*Macbeth* is not history but a tragedy." Prove.
- What are the various aspects of *Macbeth* as a tragedy ?
- "*Macbeth* is a tragedy of character." Prove.
- "The cause of disaster in *Macbeth* is frailty which is conscious." Discuss.
- "The final impression in *Macbeth* is that of pity and compassion." How far do you agree with this statement ?
- "Shakespeare does not believe in poetic justice because it is incompatible with the realities of life." Comment.
- "There is a touch in the conception of *Macbeth* that makes it like gathering and breaking storm." Discuss.
- "The atmosphere in *Macbeth* is that of blood and darkness." Explain.
- "*Macbeth* reflects contemporary superstitions." Discuss.
- "Shakespeare's weird sisters are wholly different from any representative of the witches." Discuss.
- "The foremost function of the supernatural in *Macbeth* is to contribute to the atmosphere of the play." Comment.
- "The weird sisters are personified forces of disorder, disintegration and conflict." Comment.
- "*Macbeth* is a good model of Shakespespeare's dramatic workmanship." Discuss.
- Write a note on the dramatic irony in *Macbeth*.
- How does Shakespeare provide dramatic relief in *Macbeth*. Give illustrations.

"Shakespeare's outlook on life seems to be pessimistic in spite of the fact that he concludes *Macbeth* with a note of joy." Discuss.

● Write a note on flattening of characters in *Macbeth.*

● Critics hold *Macbeth* as one of the most classical of Shakespeare's plays. Give reasons.

● Trace the Greek and Roman classical influences in *Macbeth*.

● "It is Shakespeare's style with all its peculiarities which has made *Macbeth* a tremendous tragedy." Argue.

● "H. C. Grieson contends that *Macbeth* is not the greatest of Shakespeare's tragedies while Verity regards it as the greatest treasure of dramatic literature." What is your opinion ?

SECTION V

IMPORTANT CHARACTERS

MACBETH

Greatness. Professor A. C. Bradley giving an admirable estimate of Macbeth's character in his lectures on 'Shakespearean Tragedy' says, "Macbeth, the cousin of a king mild, just, and beloved, but now too old to lead his army, is introduced to us as a general of extraordinary prowess, who has covered himself with glory in putting down a rebellion and repelling the invasion of a foreign army. In these conflicts he showed great personal courage, a quality which he continues to display throughout the drama in regard to all plain dangers. It is difficult to be sure of his customary demeanour, for in the play we see him either in what appears to be an exceptional relation to his wife, or else in the throes of remorse and desperation ; but from his behaviour during his journey home after the war, from his *later* conversations with Lady Macbeth, and from his language to the murderers of Banquo and to others, we imagine him as a great warrior, somewhat masterful, rough and abrupt, a man to inspire some fear and much admiration. He was thought 'honest,' or honourable ; he was trusted appartently, by everyone ; Macduff, a man of the highest integrity 'loved him well.' And there was, in fact, much good in him." "We have no warrant, I think," says Bradley, "for describing him, with many writers, as of a 'noble' nature, like Hamlet or Othello ; but he had a keen sense both of honour and of the worth of a good name. The phrase, again, 'too full of the milk of human kindness' is applied to him in impatence by his wife, who did not fully understand him ; but certainly he was far from devoid of humanity and pity."

Vacillation. Professor John W. Draper of West Virginia University says that critics have found Macbeth highly "contradictory and difficult." In the words of the Professor, Macbeth "actually has the vacillation so commonly attributed to Hamlet. His stronger wife calls

him '*infirme of purpose*' and subject to the fantasies of 'childhood.' She declares that this '*constancie*' has left him '*unattended*.' His mind is 'full of scorpions'; and he doubts decisions even in the making. Without Lady Macbeth, he would not have killed the King and yet would have regretted not doing so; and he puts off the murder of Macduff until too late and then blames his "*flighty purpose*." "His shifting character," remarks Draper, "confuses not only modern critics but also the characters about him in the play; he was an '*honest*' soldier, is now a cruel '*tyrant*': some think him '*mad*'; some, '*valiant*'; indeed, '*His pester'd senses...... recoil and start*'."

Mad. Toward the end, he seems to realize that he has a "*minde diseased*," demands a physician, and then cries hoplessly. "*Throw Physicke to the dogs, Ile none of it*."

Contrast. In the camp, he is brave and choleric; before Duncan, sanguine and jovial; with his wife, subtle and treacherous; he is the true son of Murcury, "*mutable* ......good with the good, euill with the euill."

Phlegmatic. Miss L.B. Compbell, in *Shakespeare's Tragic Heroes*, thinks Macbeth as "fearful and so presumably phlegmatic; but he is not afraid in the fighting either in the beginning of the play or at the end; his humour is more complex than this; and he veers like the wind."

Horrible Imaginings. Macbeth has according to Professor Draper "*horrible imaginings*" and "*sorryest fancies*" of the mercurial man; and his wife declares that these are "*a thing of custome*" with him, and he is "*often thus*," and has been "*from his youth*." At night, he has "*terrible dreams*" and *restless ecstasy*." He is most susceptible to the suggestions of the Weird Sisters, even seeks them to find out "*By the worst means, the worst*."

Mercurial Complexion. The Mercurial complexion was "proud," and Macbeth has "vaulting ambition" that urged him to the crown and so to all his evil deeds. He is the perfect royal misfit; Richard was born to the throne, and so should have been truly royal, but his complexion belied his blood; Macbeth was not to the manner born, and showed it in his mercurial temperament.

Theme, the Keynote. "*Macbeth,*" says A. W. Verity, "has been termed the Tragedy of Ambition. All that a great work of art means and teaches can seldom, if ever, be crystallised in a phrase; nor is *Macbeth* an exception to the principle, though it is the least complex of Shakespeare's tragedies and is, indeed, marked by a sheer simplicity of theme, motive and treatment which consorts with the simple, unsophisticated period of the events. Still, 'Tregedy of Ambition' seems a true and adequate description of the play, to this extent at least, that ambition is the mainspring of the action. Ambition alone calls into operation the forces that bring about the central deed and its train of fearful results."

Selfishly Ambitious. In Bradley's opinion Macbeth was "exceedingly ambitious. He must have been so by temper. The tendency must have been greatly strengthened by his marriage." "When we see him," says Bradley, "it has been further stimulated by his remarkable success and by the consciousness of exceptional powers and merit. It becomes a passion." "In Macbeth himself," says Verity, "it is selfish ambition, the unqualified passion to possess what is not his, the conscious self-seeking that confesses itself to itself and dispenses with the hypocrisy of self-exculpation. In Lady Macbeth it is selfless ambition, a more potent, deadlier, incentive because born of love and misguided self-sacrifice. And in each the working of this passion, however different its origin, is the same, *viz.*, the ruin of a nature not incapable of better things. For neither is 'fiend-like': else they were not tragic figures at all; their fall would touch us with no sense of the 'pity of it,' their fate in all its terror of long-drawn torture and inglorious death would stir no sympathy."

Heroic Warrior. "The good side of Macbeth's character," remarks Verity, "is brought into the greater prominence. The second scene represents him as the typical heroic warrior, 'Bellona's bridegroom.' In Duncan's eyes he is a 'peerless kinsman.' There must be great capacities of goodness in the man of whom these descriptions are spoken by those who should know him well. But these possibilities are annulled by inordinate ambition and signal weakness of will."

Imagination. In Bradley's opinion, "This bold ambitious man of action has, within certain limits, the imagination of a poet—an imagination on the one hand extremely sensitive to impressions of a certain kind, and, on the other, productive of violent disturbance both of mind and body. Through it he is kept in contact with supernatural impressions and is liable to supernatural fears." "With his ambition," claims Verity, "is joined an equally excessive imagination. On the positive side these two qualities, ambition and imagination, are the leading traits of his character. The one dominates in the earlier the other in the latter part of the play; for the one instigates the crime which crowns his desires and leaves no further scope for ambition and the other is the chief instrument by which Nemesis avenges the crime.

Moral Weakness. "On the negative side," remarks Verity, "his character presents a weakness of moral courage in inverse proportion to his physical bravery, and a conscience that serves but to hamper his schemes by feeble, intermittent scruples, and to rob success of such satisfaction as the calculating, remorseless villainy of a Richard III enjoys."

Guilty. In Professor Bradley's opinion, "What appeals to him is always the image of his own guilty heart or bloody deed, or some image which derives from them its terror and gloom. These, when they arise, hold him spell bound and possess him wholly, like a hypnotic trance which is at the same time the ecstasy of poet." "The irony of the life," says Verity, "places Macbeth amid

circumstances which seem designed to further the triumph of evil. He has meditated the crime before his first meeting with the Witches ; and at that meeting he is already flushed with the pride of great achievement.

Susceptible Temptation. " Thus from his previous dreams of kingship and from his present consciousness of merit," remarks Verity, he is in a mental and moral condition specially susceptible to temptation. The temptation comes in the manner that would most appeal to him. Extreme imaginativeness makes him the easy prey of ' supernatural soliciting.' The effect of his first contact with this mysterious, external influence which harmonises so strangely with his inmost thoughts is profound."

Superstition. "We see him ' rapt ' in one of those moods of abstraction and reverie in which, more than once in the play, he loses touch with the realities of the moment," claims Verity. " Yet," says he, " the influence of imagination soon works in the opposite direction to superstition. It paints with appalling vividness the consequences of his contemplated deed."

Shaken with Conflict. "Thus his whole 'state of man' is shaken with the conflict of emotion," remarks Verity, "and he would fain temporise in paralysed suspense. Events, however, are against him. Duncan's nomination of Malcolm compels a decision of some kind, and Duncan's coming furnishes the great opportunity.

Struggle in Soul. "The struggle in Macbeth's soul," says Verity, "starts anew, and now his wife intervenes with her terrible resources of evil influence. Still, imagination once more admonishes and holds him back and conscience and prudence unite their voices in the warning. The victory over ambition and even his wife's influence seems gained : he will ' proceed no further ' in the ' business,' and halts on the brink."

Love. "But Lady Macbeth," in Verity's opinion, "is not to be diverted from the purpose which, suggested originally by him, has fascinated her. And now their

very love becomes a curse to him: what should have been to his advantage is turned into an occasion of falling. For knowing his character, on its weak side, at any rate, and knowing her power over him, she scruples not to use her knowledge and power to the full, playing on every motive of temptation and incitement which a swift brain and remorseless determination can suggest."

Irresolution. "Against such urgency, stronger than the 'supernatural soliciting' itself, he cannot hold out," claims Verity. "The iron will masters the irresolute will, sweeps aside scruples and fears, and bears him forward on its resistless current. The crime which originated in the promptings of ambition is consummated, and ambition as a dramative motive of tragedy is exhausted."

Ruling Motive. "Thenceforth," says Verity, "imagination is the ruling motive. From the moment of Duncan's murder to Macbeth's latest breath imagination gives him no rest. At first, indeed, when the crisis calls for instant action, the instinct of absolute self-preservation asserts sway."

Wanton Crime. "Macbeth shows much of his soldierly capacity for action," remarks Verity, "and plays his part well, save for the momentary impulse which makes him slay the grooms and thus rouse needless suspicion. But when the immediate peril is over and the time for reflection has come, then we see him self-tortured into a frenzy of unrest and wanton crime."

Banquo's Murder. "The turning-point of the plot," says Verity, "may appear to be Banquo's murder, in that it precipitates Macbeth's downfall. Till that point events have played into his hands; he has won the crown, and the flight of Malcolm and Donalbain has left him in undisturbed possession. But now all goes against him. The similarity of the second murder converts to certainty men's suspicions as to the cause of the first, at the banquet-scene he betrays himself irredeemably, and his thanes are driven to flight or measures of self-defence."

Decline of Fortune. "Thus the murder of Banquo marks the decline of Macbeth's fortunes," continues

Verity, "it is the beginning of the end. But the end was inevitable, whatever the steps towards it. Everything that follows the murder of Duncan is the direct outcome of it. If Duncan lived so would Banquo. The first crime changed the whole course of Macbeth's career. It is the real dividing line, the essential turning-point, the parting in life's way. And the fact is expressed in his own words (II. 3. 73-78)."

Singleness of Purpose. "The rubicon of crime, once crossed," says Verity, "the character-interest changes. Hitherto, as regards Macbeth, it has lain in study of the struggle within his soul. We have watched the unequal conflict between the good and the evil in him, the one supported by his scruples and fears, the other by his ambitious longings by the intervention of 'fate and metaphysical aid,' and by his wife's incentives. Now the contest gives place to a hideous consistency and singleness of purpose. 'Things bad begun make strong themselves by ill' is his watchword and practice."

Villainy. "For imagination, which once almost availed to withhold him from the deed, now works through his conscience and still more through fear, and goads him on to effect the removal of any in whom it sees a possible avenger of Duncan and claimant to the throne," remarks Verity. "The vessel of Macbeth's peace is poisoned and the poison corrodes his whole being. Not an instant's enjoyment has the successful accomplishment of villainy brought to him or her."

Deliberate Contriver of Murder. "Existence becomes a restless ecstasy of haunting fancies and alarms," claims Verity. "He who could with difficulty bend himself up to the first terrible deed, and only did the second (II. 3. 89-101) in a fit of fury and panic, now becomes the deliberate contriver of murder, and soon passes to the third stage of blood-thirsty abandonment."

Bloodsteeped Hallucination. "Banquo, the more favoured of the Weird Sisters," remarks Verity, "is his chief dread and falls his speedy victim; but bloodsteeped

hallucination wreaks the ineffable avengement of that vision at the feast. Driven into deeper desperation, Macbeth must now be worst, by whatsoever means, and seeks inspiration of the Witches. Their prophecies instil a 'security' that does but increase his reckless defiance of heaven and humanity."

Bloody Mania. "Logically his credulity should restrain him from the crimes that wring daily cries of agony from his bleeding land," says Verity, "they are wanton, causeless savagery in one who rests his trust on riddles that seem impossible of fulfilment against him. But Macbeth has passed far beyond the appeal of reason. Bloodshed has become a mania ('some say he's mad'), restless action the very condition of his being."

Gloom. "At length," says Verity, "all the normal relations and interests of life have no reality in his eyes. An intolerable gloom settles down on him. He learns of his wife's death with absolute callousness, it merely evokes an out burst of weariness and contempt for existence itself."

Belief in Witches. "One thing alone he holds fast to with blind desperation," concludes Verity, "his belief in the witches' supposed assurances of his safety. But at last the truth which Banquo divined from the first is forced upon Macbeth and he sees these juggling fiends in their true light. Naught now remains to him but the animal instinct that clings to life :

They have tied me to a stake ; I cannot fly,
But, bear-like I must fight the course.

And this world-sated desperado had been 'the brave Macbeth,' 'Bellona's bridegroom,' the 'peerless kinsman'."

Tragic Grandeur : Bradley says, "In the very depths a gleam of his native love of goodness, and with it a touch of tragic grandeur, rests upon him. The evil he has desperately embraced continues to madden or to wither his inmost heart. No experience in the world could bring him to glory in it or make his peace with it, or to forget what he once was and Iago and Goneril never were.

LADY MACBETH

Leading Characteristics. Professor F. W. Robinson says that Lady Macbeth's leading characteristic is her force of character, backed, on the negative side, by a complete lack of imagination. She egged her husband on to the crime. "Lady Macbeth, the Clytemnestra of English tragedy, is naturally drawn as a foil to Macbeth," begins A. W. Verity. "She possesses 'a frightfully determined will,' an iron stability of resolve," says he. "It is to her what imagination is to Macbeth, the feature that transcends and dominates all others in the character. It is the secret of her influence over him and of her success in winning him to consent. It enables her to carry her share in the plot through, to remedy his errors, and come to his rescue in the great crises of the action."

Strain. "But," says Verity, "it proves her ruin. It makes her impose upon herself and bear, for a time, a strain beyond the ultimate endurance of the rest of her powers. In fact, her imperious will, like his excess of the imaginative faculty, disturbs the proper relation of the forces of character. An abnormal element that knows no restraint of conscience or common prudence, that recks nothing of foresight or fear, it is the source of abnormal effort, the reaction from which wrecks the whole fabric. She has extreme self-reliance, unlike Macbeth, who turns instinctively to her for co-operation, until his sense of menacing retribution subtitutes its fatal stimulus."

Phlegmatic. "In Lady Macbeth," observes Professor John W. Draper, "the struggle finds an inner resolution : as a woman, she must have been by nature more or less phlegmatic ; her ambitions show her choleric ; and her intrigues and madness point to a melancholy end. Shakespeare marks the first part of this struggle when she cries :

> Come, you spirits
> That tend on mortal thoughts, unsex me here,
> And fill me, from the crown to the toe, top-full
> Of direst cruelty ! make thick my blood,
> Stop up the access and passage to remorse,
> etc., etc.

Later she tells her husband that she would kill her child rather than give up the murder of Duncan, so utterly has she suppressed her womanly phlegm in choleric ambition."

Intellectual Superiority. "Intellectually, too, she is Macbeth's superior," says Verity, "as Portia is the intellectual superior of Bassanio, and Rosalind of Orlando. With what dexterity she meets Macbeth's reluctance to go further in the work and assails his weak points: how swiftly she perceives—too late—the effect of the deed on Macbeth: what resource and alertness of brain she manifests at the banquet-scene, where she tries one method, and then another, and yet another, of restoring his mental balance."

Lack of Imagination. "But intellectual keenness does not compensate for the lack of imagination," says Verity, "and in the latter quality she is, surely, deficient. Gifted with true imaginative insight she could never have made her appalling miscalculation as to the moral results which their crime would produce in Macbeth, and in herself."

Wrong Calculation. "She thinks that though he may shrink from the deed through fears or scruples," remarks Verity, "yet he will not wish it undone: that he will be able to reap joy of his sin. She never hints the least foreshadowing of the revolution which really works in both. And this limitation of view argues inadequacy of penetrative imagination. It is significant, too, that the great outbursts of imaginative eloquence which signalise the play even among Shakespeare's works all come from Macbeth. And there are moments (*e.g.*, II. 2. 40) when hectic fancy seems to transport him beyond her comprehension."

Conscience. "Of conscience," says Verity, "she certainly manifests less than Macbeth. It has been held, indeed, that even the sleep-walking scene does not justify us in crediting her with true remorse: 'from her lips, as from her husband's, no word of contrition for the

past ever falls.' Still, we should judge people less by what they say than by what we see them to be; and seeing Lady Macbeth wrecked in body and soul, we feel, I think, that of such an overthrow some working of conscience must be a potent cause. No doubt there are other causes."

Horror. "The recoil from the revolting effort," continues Verity, "the physical horror of the scene of that fatal night; the memory uncontrolled in sleep by the normal will-power, of those appalling sights: the bitterness of isolation from Macbeth (for the separating power of partnership in guilt is one of the play's great lessons); the sheer sense of failure and frustrated hopes; the slow poison of brooding regret for which she lacks the men's antidote of action: all these have joined to make her this wraith-like figure of despair. Yet deeper than all these preying on her 'nearest' of being *must* be the *causa causans* of an outraged conscience."

Devoted to Husband. "The good in Lady Macbeth's character," continues Verity, "what redeems her from unqualified detestation, is less on the surface than the good in Macbeth. But the better nature which her action belies is indicated by several traits. Thus she is wholly devoted to her husband. Her whole ambition is for him and through him; of herself and of elevation for herself she never speaks. The tenderness of his bearing witnesses her power of attraction and charm."

No Reproach. "She utters no word of reproach after his breakdown, but shows herself still solicitous for his welfare (III. 4. 141)," remarks Verity. "It is indeed," says he, "one of the regal notes of their relations that nothing of vulgar recrimination ever passes between them. They know that each has ruined the other, he her by his original suggestion of the crime and she him by her relentless instigation of it against his better judgment: but they separate in silence and "with averted eyes" move towards their several dooms unreproachful."

Misguided and Misguiding. Verity says, "As she is shown us a loyal, though misguided and misguiding wife,

so there are hints of maternal and filial tenderness in her nature (I·7. 54-59, II. 2·13-14)."

Gentler Impulses. "Moreover, her invocation (rhetorical rather than imaginative) of the powers of darkness proves that she is no stranger to the gentler impulses of womanhood," remarks Verity. "Goneril would not need to pray that she might be 'unsexed,' nor a Regan to petition for a richer measure of 'direst cruelty.' Neither of that hideous pair of Gorgons could apprehend or even comprehend the 'compunctious visitings of nature'."

Unnatural Nervousness. "But Lady Macbeth knows that to execute her full purpose she must be nerved by some unnatural access of ferocity," continues Verity. "And it seems as if her prayer were answered: the woman who can go into that chamber of death must be unsexed, for a space: but nature recurs, and while Macbeth is brutalised by crime, her finer spirit is broken by the reaction from moral self-evidence."

More than Serpent. "Lady Macbeth and Hamlet," concludes Verity, "stand apart from the rest of Shakespeare's creations in the intensity and perplexity of the interest they arouse. Of all the women Shakespeare has drawn, none exercises so strange a fascination (not even the 'serpent of the old Nile') as this fragile, indomitable northern Queen, who makes the great denial—of her sex—and greatly suffers, even to the death."

Simple Personality. In Professor F. W. Robinson's opinion, "Lady Macbeth has a far simpler personality than her husband, and in so far as this simplicity is due to Shakespeare's not developing her character we have to say that the woman is less successfully drawn than the man."

MACBETH AND LADY MACBETH COMPARED AND CONTRASTED

Terrible Figures. "From the murky background of *Macbeth* stand out the two great terrible figures, who dwarf all remaining characters of the drama," says Pro-

fessor Bradley. Continuing, he remarks that both of the characters of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth " are sublime and both inspire far more than the other tragic heroes, the feeling of awe. They are never detached in imagination from the atmosphere which surrounds them and adds to their grandeur and terror. It is, as it were, continued into their souls. For within them is all that we felt without—the darkness of night, lit with the flame of tempest and the hues of blood, and haunted by wild and direful shapes, ' murdering ministers,' spirits of remorse, and maddening visions of peace lost and judgment to come." " The way to be untrue to Shakespeare here, as always," claims Professor Bradley, " is to relax the tension of imagination, to conventionalise, to conceive Macbeth, for example, as a half-hearted cowardly criminal and Lady Macbeth as a whole-hearted fiend."

Likeness. " The two characters," continues Professor Bradley, " are fired by one and the same passion of ambition ; and to a considerable extent they are alike. The disposition of each is high, proud, and commanding. They are born to rule if not to reign. They are peremptory or contemptuous to their inferiors. They are not children of light, like Brutus and Hamlet ; they are of the world. We observe in them no love of country, and no interest in the welfare of anyone outside their family. Their habitual thoughts and aims are, and, we imagine, long have been, all of station and power. And though in both there is something, and in one much, of what is higher—honour, conscience, humanity—they do not live consciously in the light of these things or speak their language. Not that they are egoists, like Iago ; or if they are egoists, theirs is an *egoïsme a deux*. They have no separate ambitions." In a side remark the Professor says that " the assertion that Lady Macbeth sought a crown for herself, or sought anything for herself, apart from her husband is absolutely unjustified by anything in the play. It is based on a sentence of Holinshed's which Shakespeare did *not* use." Anyhow continuing his discussion Bradley observes that Macbeth and Lady Macbeth " support and love one another. They suffer

together. And if, as time goes on, they drift a little apart, they are not vulgar souls, to be alienated and recriminated when they experience the fruitlessness of their ambition. They remain to the end tragic, even grand."

Contrast. "So far," says Bradley, "is much likeness between them. Otherwise they are contrasted, and the action is built upon this contrast. Their attitudes towards the projected murder of Duncan are quite different; and it produces in them equally different effects. In consequence, they appear in the earlier part of the play as of equal importance, if indeed Lady Macbeth does not over-shadow her husband; but afterwards she retires more and more into the background, and he becomes unmistakably the leading figure. His is indeed a far more complex character."

3. BANQUO

Victim of Witches. Professor Bradley says, "The interest of the character of Banquo arises from the main changes that take place in him, and from the influence of the witches upon him. And it is curious that Shakespeare's intention here is so frequently missed. Banquo being at first strongly contrasted with Macbeth, as an inncent man with a guilty, it seems to be supposed that this contrast must be continued to his death; while, in reality though it is never removed, it is gradually diminished. Banquo, in fact, may be described much more truly than Macbeth as the victim of the witches."

No Lurking Guilt. Continuing his discussion, the Professor says, "He bore a part only less distinguished than Macbeth's in the battles against Sweno and Macdonwald. He and Macbeth are called 'our captains,' and when they meet the witches they are traversing the 'blasted health' alone together. Banquo accosts the strange shapes without the slightest fear. They lay their fingers on their lips, as if to signify that they will not or must not speak to *him*. To Macbeth's brief appeal, 'Speak, if you can: what are you?' they at once reply,

not by saying what they, are, but by hailing him thane of Glamis, Thane of Cawdor, and King hereafter. Banquo is greatly surprised that his partner should start as if in fear, and observes that he is at once 'rapt' ; and he bids the witches, if they know the future, to prophesy to *him*, who neither begs their favour nor fears their hate. Macbeth, looking back at a later time, remembers Banquo's daring, and how

> he chid the sisters,
> When first they put the name of King upon me,
> And bade them speak to him.

'Chid' is an exaggeration ; but Banquo is evidently a bold man, probably an ambitious one, and certainly has no lurking guilt in his ambition. On hearing the predictions concerning himself and his descedants he makes no answer, and when the witches are about to vanish he shows none of Macbeth's feverish anxiety to know more. On their vanishing he is simply amazed, wonders if they were anything but hallucinations, makes no reference to the predictions till Macbeth mentions them, and then answers lightly.''

Innocent and Bold. Professor Bradley declares that when ''Ross and Angus, entering, announce to Macbeth that he has been made Thane of Cawdor, Banquo exclaims, aside, to himself or Macbeth, 'What ! can the devil speak true?' He now believes that the witches were real beings and the 'instruments of darkness.' When Macbeth, turning to him, whispers,

> Do you not hope your children shall be kings,
> When those that gave the Thane of Cawdor to me
> Promised no less to them ?

he draws with the boldness of innocence the inference which is really occupying Macbeth, and answers,

> That, trusted home,
> Might yet enikndle you unto the crown
> Beside the thane of Cawdor.

Here he still speaks, I think," says Bradley, "in a free off-hand, even jesting manner. (' enkindle' meaning merely 'excite you to *hope* for'). But then, possibly from noticing something in Macbeth's face he becomes graver, and goes on, with a significant 'but,

> But 'tis strange :
> And oftentimes, to win us to our harm,
> The instruments of darkness tell us truths;
> Win us with honest trifles, to betray's
> In deepest consequence.

He afterwards observes for the second time that his partner is 'rapt' ; but he explains his obstruction naturally and sincerely by referring to the surprise of his new honours ; and at the close of the scene, when Macbeth proposes that they shall discuss the predictions together at some later time, he answers in the cheerful, rather bluff manner, which he has used almost throughout, 'very gladly.' Nor was there any reason why Macbeth's rejoinder, 'Till then, enough,' should excite misgivings in him, though it implied a request for silence, and though the whole behaviour of his partner during the scene must have looked very suspicious to him when the prediction of the crown was made good through the murder of Duncan."

Frankness. Bradley says that when Macbeth and Banquo join the king who, while expressing his gratitude, declares that Banquo deserves no less than Macbeth, the former thanks the king briefly. "His brief and frank acknowledgment," remarks Bradley, "is contrasted with Macbeth's laboured rhetoric ; and, as Macbeth goes out, Banquo turns with hearty praises of him to the king."

Sense of Peace and Beauty. While approaching Macbeth's castle in company with Duncan, it is he who gains on us by speaking these beautiful lines quoted by Professor Bradley also :

This guest of summer.
The temple-haunting martlet, does approve,
By his loved mansionery, that the heaven's breath
Smells wooingly here : no jutty, frieze,
Buttress, nor coign of vantage, but this bird
Hath made his pendent bed and procreant cradle :
Where they most breed and haunt, I have observed,
The air is delicate.

I—VI

These lines "tell of that freedom of heart," says Bradley, "and of that sympathetic sense of peace and beauty, which the Macbeth of the tragedy could never feel."

Macbeth's Estimate of Banquo. Macbeth gives a true testimony of the greatness of Banquo. His words are as follows :—

"Our fears in Banquo
Stick deep ; and in his royalty of nature
Reigns that which would be fear'd ;
'Tis much he dares
And, to that dauntless temper of his mind,
He hath a wisdom that doth guide has valour
To not in safety. There is none but he
Whose being I do fear ; and, under him;
My Genius is rebuked ; as it is said,
Mark Antony's was by Caesar."

III—I

It is clear from the above that Banquo's courage, wisdom and nobility of character creates a sense of fear in Macbeth's heart just as all good and noble things terrify evil-minded people. Evil attracts evil and when the witches appear before the two generals Macbeth is attracted in them more than Banquo. The former starts but the latter it unaffacted.

Honesty. Banquo is honest, no doubt, but it is wrong to maintain that he is totally unambitious. It will be more correct to say that he is a modest man whose mind in the course of the development of events is swayed by the prophecy of the witches that he will be the ancestor of a ruling dynasty. The weird sisters dominate his thoughts to

the extent of creating so bitter a conflict in his mind that it becomes impossible for him to sleep :

> *"A heavy summons lies like lead upon me*
> *And yet I would not sleep ; merciful powers*
> *Restrain the cursed thoughts that nature*
> *Gives way to in repose !"*

His mind labours under the strain of the predictions of the witches. He is not at any rate dishonest. He tells Macbeth plainly that he would lend support to Macbeth only if it does not involve disloyalty to the king. He is not prepared to secure the crown for his issue at the cost of his conscience and honesty. It should, however, be noted that his attitude after the murder of Duncan is a bit objectionable and throws ample light on the darker side of his character. He had solid reason to believe that it was Macbeth who murdered the king and yet he does not try even a bit to bring the murderer to book. His acquiescence is just almost criminal. He in a way harbours an offender. It is due to the fact that he does not wish to stop the course of events moving towards the fulfilment of the prophecy which promised the throne to his children. He gives allegiance to the usurper in spite of the fact that he knows him to be a culprit. It leads us to an obvious conclusion that he is an accomplice to a hideous crime of murder. But such an estimate of this noble man would cause him great injustice. It is more reasonable to suppose that Banquo submits to the accession of Macbeth because the latter is too strong for him and not because Banquo himself is mean or has base motives.

4. MACDUFF

In the first half of the play Banquo is prominent among the minor characters, but in the second half Macduff comes into the limelight. It is Macduff who knocks at the door and discovers the murder of the king. Although the murder of the king's Chamberlains appears to him to be unusual, he accepts the official version of murder without allowing suspicions to creep into his mind in the initial

stages. It is, however, afterwards that he seriously suspects Macbeth. After the murder of king Duncan, Macduff seems to be exercising increasing influence on the progress of events.

Basic Elements. Basically Macduff is noble, fearless, patriotic and wise. Just as Banquo is a foil to Macbeth Macduff is a foil to Banquo. Macduff's character is pure and simple. Intense patriotism is a prominent trait in his nature.

Honesty. He is extremely honest and frank to such an extent that he openly declares hostility against Macbeth who out of his rage orders the whole of his family to be slaughtered. He is so honest that he does not go to the coronation ceremony of Macbeth because he is convinced that it was Macbeth who murdered the king, Duncan. He does not pose faithfulness to the usurper. In this respect he stands aloof from Banquo who submitted to the criminal.

Patriotism. Macduff has greater care and love for his country than for his family. In this respect he is resolute, brave and unbending. His resolution against Macbeth gains strength in course of time and at last patriotism compels him to rush to England for seeking help for his country. He does not care for his wife and child in comparison to the wiser and nobler cause of the freedom of his country. There are some critics who charge Macduff with cowardice on the ground that he did not disclose his intention to his wife and flew away from home for fear of Macbeth. This opinion is wrong because as soon as he reaches England he adopts bold policies which go a long way to encourage Malcolm. Then again he makes his mark in the battlefield too. His wife's interpretation of his character that he is either foolish or devoid of love is based on misunderstanding. To argue that he could take his wife, his children along with him is again defective

logic because such a wholesale migration could rouse general suspicion. Moreover out of his nobility he could not suppose for a moment that Macbeth would stoop down to such a cruety as to get his wife and children killed in his absence. He is brave and upright. When he contacts Malcolm, he fails to win his trust, in the beginning his passionate and patriotic outbursts dispel all clouds of doubts from the mind of the prince. He passes the severe tests to which Malcolm puts him and at last Macduff ushers into prominence among the liberating forces who ultimately relieve the country from the tyranny of Macbeth.

Love. As it had been pointed out earlier, it is wrong to suppose that Macduff has no love for his family. His love for his wife and children is evident in his grief at the news of the massacre of his family by Macbeth. From that time onward he takes a vow to have his revenge. Out of deep despair and emotion he cries :

He has no children. All my pretty ones ?
Did you say all ? O hell-kite ! All ?
What, all my pretty chickens and their dam
At one fell swoop ?

His words are suggestive. They have a world of meaning enveloped in them. He does not speak much in any circumstances but whatever he says is full of significance. His soul is struck by anguish at the loss of his family.

Man of Action. Macduff is a man of action. He does not waste time in words. To Macbeth he says :

I have no words
My voice is in my sword : Than bloodier vallain
Than terms can give thee out !

He does not loose himself in false hopes or extravagant prospects. He keeps silent for most of the time but in his heart be is determined to translate his thought into action by playing a soldierly role in the cause of his country.

LADY MACDUFF

Simple Wife. "Lady Macduff," says Prof. Bradley, "is a simple wife and mother who has no thoughts for any-

thing beyond her home. Her love for her children shows her at once that her husband's flight exposes them to terrible indignation against him. It does not even occur to her that he has acted from public spirit, or that there is a thing :

What had he done to make him fly the land ?

Poor Soul. He must have been made to do it. He fled for fear. He does not love his wife and children. He is a traitor. The poor soul is almost beside herself—and with too good reason. But when the murderer bursts in with the question, ' Where is your husband ?' she becomes in a moment the wife, and the great noble's wife.

I hope, in no place so unsanctified
Where such as thou may'st find him.

What did Shakespeare mean us to think of Macduff's flight, for which Macduff has been so much blamed by others beside his wife ? Certainly not that fear for himself or want of love for his family, had anything to do with it.

Type. The character of Lady Macduff, though boldly drawn by Shakespeare in a highly skilful way whicy stirs up the sense of sympathy and pathos, has not verh dominating features. It may be claimed to be a type and not an individualised sketch.

True Mother. She appears to us to be a true monther whose sorrows vansih in the innocent talk of her baby. The greatest point of sorrow to her is that her husband has without any known cause left her and the family alone and has gone to England, leaving his dependants in the clutches of the bloody usurper, Macbeth. This injures her heart.

Timid. She is however timid, and runs away in horror when her son is butchered by the bloody murderer. This attitude of hers is inexcusable. No mother can leave her children at the mercy of a murderer.

Not Ambitious. Lady Macduff is not ambitious. She lives in a limited domestic atmosphere. Her only care in the world is to keep her husband and her children happy. She is ignorant of the violent agitations and revolts going on in the kingdom outside the four walls of her home.

Narrow Mind. She has a simple mind and narrow outlook. She is unable to grasp wider implications of actions and does not see reason what wisdom there could be in her husband's action of leaving herself and children alone. In her opinion her husband does not adequately love the family. She is essentially a woman with womanly sweetness. Her deep attachment and love for her husband peeps behind every word uttered by her.

Lady's Baby. "Little Macduff suggests a few words on Shakespeare's boys," says Bradley. "It is somewhat curious that nearly all of them appear in tragic or semi-tragic dramas." In Bradly's opinion there is a touch of comedy in the conversation of Lady Macduff with her little boy. The professor further remarks that the scence in which Lady Macduff and her child appear and the passage where their slaughter is reported to Macduff has much dramatic value, but in neither case is the effect due to any great extent to the special characters of the persons concerned."

6. DUNCAN

Lenient. Shakespeare has drawn the character of Duncan as a saintly king with bold artistic strokes befitting the purposes of the drama in his hand. The king is an elderly person, refined in his nature and kind in his attitude towards his courtiers and officers. Although his character has been very lightly sketched so that his individuality does not stand out in full relief like that of his murderer, Macbeth, yet the only impression which the passing glimpse of this noble ruler leaves upon our minds is that his extreme virtue has contributed to his lenieney that has in its turn contributed to a weakness which is undesirable in a ruler.

Incapable. He is, therefore, incapable of keeping due discipline in his state. According to kingly tradition a ruler was required to take the field personally when there is rebellion in his kingdom. Duncan is infirm. He does not go to the battlefield himself but deputes Macbeth in his place. The consequences of this are far-reaching. Macbeth finds an opportunity of winning laurels for himself. The prestige of the king is naturally eclipsed by the glory of his General.

Bad Judge. Duncan does not appear to be a good judge of men. One proof of this is that he placed wrong confidence in the thane of Cawdor who proved to be a traitor and stood in revolt against him. The king withdraws his love and trust only when Cawdor's disloyalty has caused him and his people considerable injury,

Blind Trust. Duncan is frank and amiable by nature. Out of his magnanimity he readily acknowledges any services that are rendered to him by his officers. It must, however, be remembered that he has no capacity of condemning a rebel in effective and strong terms. His habit of blindly trusting people leads him to rely on Macbeth who is breeding black thoughts in his mind and cherishing disloyal ambitions in his heart. He supposes Macbeth to be his most trustworthy cousin :

O worthy cousin !
The sin of my ingratitude even now
Was heavy on me : thou art so far before
That swiftest wing of recompense is slow
To overtake thee : would thou had'st less deserved
That the proportion both of thanks and payment
Might have been mine !

Courteous. He is courteous and civilized by his nature. When he arrives at Macbeth's castle he addresses Lady Macbeth in the following terms :

See, see, our honoured hostess !
The love that follows us sometime is our trouble,
Which still we thank is love.

No Evil. Macbeth tries but fails to find an excuse on the basis of which he may think himself justified in putting Duncan to death. He thinks hard to discover some flaw in his character, some lacuna in his morality, some evil in his actions but at last he is compelled to declare :

I have no spur
To prick the sides of my intent, but only
Vaulting ambition.

Saint. As a whole Duncan may be said to be a considerate person having saintly piety to such an extent that he becomes incapable of ruling Scotland effectively. He cannot cope with intrigues among his subjects. He is too generous to lavish gifts, presents and titles upon his courtiers and officers. He lacks power of penetration into the characters of others. He is easily deceivable and is unable to perceive treachery. All these weaknesses and incapabilities combine together to bring about the tragedy in which this noble king had to lose his life.

MALCOLM

Malcolm is a brave and youthful prince, an embodiment of his father's qualities and yet free from those weaknesses which made Duncan an incapable ruler. In spite of the fact that he is not so mature and experienced, he has got deep insight into character and circumstantial developments around him.

Intelligence. His wisdom and intelligence can be judged from the fact that as soon as his father is murdered under auspicious circumstances, he takes a momentus decision at once and flies to England in order to seek help from the English king. This shows his altreness of mind and practical prudence. He is far-sighted enough to foresee the dark developments, and has capacity to act promptly at critical moments.

Cautious. Malcolm is highly cautious from the very beginning. He does not allow himself to easily trust people coming in contact with him. In this respect he

stands superior to his father who blindly relied on everybody and ultimately paid for his over-trust and lack of foresight very heavily. Even at the tender age through which he was passing, Malcolm had gained a lot of experience through minutely observing the policies and their consequences in his father's lifetime. These experiences had taught him to act with caution. When Macduff first joins him in England, he is reluctant to trust him. He suspects him to be the spy of Macbeth. It is only after putting him to a severe and thorough test that he is convinced of his faithfulness.

Good Leader. Malcolm possesses all the qualities of good leadership. He gathers around him only such trustworthy men who are inspired with the spirit of liberating their country from the clutches of the tyrant usurper. Again, he shows high qualities of generalship when he marches to battle against Macbeth. Like an experienced military expert he orders his soldiers to cover themselves by branches cut from the trees of Birnam wood so that the enemy may not be able to assess the number of invading troops.

A Saint. In his character Malcolm is saintly like his father. His piety made him a gem of men. Although he is a prince, he does not let himself loose in luxuries and evil activities. On one occasion he says:

> I am yet
> Unknown to woman, never was forsworn ;
> Scarcely have coveted what was mine own,
> At no time broke my faith, would not betray
> The devil to his fellows, and delight
> No less in truth than life.

In view of all the qualities claimed in the above lines, we are satisfied to imagine that in the hands of Malcolm the future of Duncan's kingdom would be happy and prosperous.

Diplomacy. Looked as a whole Malcolm seems to be a good diplomat. He possesses power of convincing others and of handling difficult situations. It is due to the fact that

he could successfully inspire confidence in the heart of Edward, the English king, that he succeeded in enlisting his support. Edward gave him military assistance because he was assured of the genuine cause and the qualities of leadership of Malcolm. When he appears before us independently after his father's murder, we mark him using the word 'we' for himself on all important occasions. This shows that he had enough self-confidence in himself to assume regal position. When he has won the victory he loses no time in exercising his sovereign powers of rewarding and punishing people. He recalls those who had migrated to other places due to Macbeth's tyrannies, rewards all those who had stood by him in his fight against the enemy and punishes all the disloyal people who had supported Macbeth. It is due to his wisdom and prudence that he is able to handle a critical situation smoothly and to create round him a strong party of supporters. In our estimation Malcolm's character is a promising one.

8. LENNOX

Lennox is a typical thane, and a harmless person. It is through him that we may have an idea of general reactions among other thanes and officers of the state.

Observer. Lennox is an active observer believing things as they appear. When Duncan's murder is discovered and suspicion is generally thrown upon the grooms, Lennox allows himself to believe the rumours to be correct. As further developments unfold the fact of Macbeth's villainies, Lennox also thinks him to be a tyrant. He knows who is the real culprit behind the murders of Duncan and Banquo.

Cautious. Lennox is, however, very cautious and careful. Unlike Macduff, who flies to England, Lennox remains behind. He does not run away impulsively but waits to see how the situation develops. He is trusted by Macbeth as well so much that when the latter goes to meet the witches for the last time, he takes him along. It is there that the hideous aspects of

Macbeth's character are revealed to Lennox. He sees with his own eyes how brutal and inhuman Macbeth is to slaughter the whole family of Macduff.

Honest. The simplicity of Lennox's nature lets him keep himself reconciled with the changed circumstances, but he is basically honest so that as soon as he discovers the brutality and villainous aspects in Macbeth's character, he goes over to a more honourable side. He is sure of the nobility of the cause for which Malcolm is fighting and when he finds an opportunity he decides to join the invaders. Once he changes sides, he begins to take a leading part among the Scottish lords. In short, his character is amiable.

ROSS

The character of Ross has an element of relief in it. When the forces of deceit, darkness and passion create in us a sense of grief and annoyance, Ross appears as a consoling figure. He is sympathetic, considerate and nice. With his flowery speeches he makes the audience laugh.

Happy Messenger. In the beginning of the play, Ross appears to us to be a happy messenger bringing for the victorious general, Macbeth, titles and honours. He is the first person who greets him as thane of Cawdor on behalf of king Duncan. After the murder of the king, Ross remains faithful to the new king and continues to support him.

Consoling Figure. We further see Ross at the castle of Macduff trying to console Lady Macduff in the absence of her husband. In very nice words he convinces her and removes her suspicions. His attitude on that occasion shows his kindness.

Changes Side. Ross is disgusted at the cruel murder of Lady Macduff and her children. He does not find himself inclined to reconcile himself with the increasing tyrannies of Macbeth and at last decides to fly away from Scotland. Soon we find him in England. It is he who tells Macduff of the tragic fate of his family. In doing so he uses tender

words and sympathetic terms. Before breaking the actual news he adequately prepares Macduff to receive it. This shows his own sensitiveness, intelligence and sympathy.

In the Field. We see Ross in the last scene playing the same role. Very tenderly he tells Siward of the death of his son. He breaks this news too in deep sympathetic terms. Immediately he sets himself to console the old man by telling him that his son died bravely fighting the enemy. In proof of his contention he declares that his son received all wounds in front and not in the back. Thus as a whole Ross possesses a relieving character.

IMPORTENT QUESTIONNAIRE

The answers to the important University questions posed here in this 'Questionnaire' may be found in earlier sections and Section V dealing with characters. The students are advised to prepare themselves thoroughly in the light of these questions.

- "From this murky background stand out the two great terrible figures, who dwarf all the remaining characters of the drama"—(*Professor Bradley*). Discuss.

- "Without Lady Macbeth, he (Macbeth) would not have killed the king and yet would have regretted not doing so"—(*Professor W. Draper*). Comment.

- "Ambition alone calls into operation the forces that bring about the central deed and its train of fearful results"—(*A. W. Verity*). Explain.

- Lady Macbeth "spurred on the reluctant purpose of Macbeth, who felt compunction at the thoughts of blood, and did not cease to represent the murder of the king as a step absolutely necessary to the fulfilment of the flattering prophecy"—(*Charles Lamb*). Discuss.

- "Macbeth has surrendered his soul before the play begins"—(*Van Doren*). How far do you agree with this statement and why.

● "This bold ambitious man of action has, within certain limits, the imagination of a poet"—(*Professor Bradley*). How far do you agree with this estimate of Macbeth ?

● "In the opening Act at least, Lady Macbeth is the most commanding and perhaps the most awe-inspiring figure that Shakespeare drew"—(*Bradley*). Discuss.

● "Lady Macbeth," says *Dr. Johnson*, "is merely detested." Comment.

● How far will it be correct to say that Lady Macbeth was a fourth witch for Macbeth ?

● "Banquo is evidently a bold man, probably an ambitious one, and certainly has no lurking guilt in his ambition"—(*Professor Bradley*). Do you agree with the above ?

● "Lady Macduff," says Bradley, "is a simple wife and mother, who has no thought for anything beyond her home." Prove.

● Compare and contrast the character of Duncan with that of his son Malcolm.

● "The character of Ross has an element of relief in it." Discuss.

SECTION VI

TEXT WITH PARAPHRASE

OF

SHAKESPEARE'S

MACBETH

SHAKESPEARE'S MACBETH

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

DUNCAN, *King of Scotland.*

MALCOLM, DONALBAIN, } *his sons*

MACBETH, BANQUO, } *generals of the King's army.*

MACDUFF, LENNOX, ROSS, MENTEITH, ANGUS, CAITHNESS } *noblemen of Scotland*

FLEANCE, *son to Banquo.*

SIWARD, *Earl of Northumberland, general of the English forces.*

Young SIWARD, *his son.*
SEYTON, *an officer attending on Macbeth.*
Boy, *son to Macduff.*
An English Doctor.
A Scotch Doctor.
A Sergeant.
A Porter.
An Old Man.
Lady MACBETH.
Lady MACDUFF.

Gentlewoman attending on Lady Macbeth.

Lords, Gentlemen, Officers, Soldiers, Murderers, Attendants and Messengers.

Hecate.
Three Witches.
Apparitions.

SCENE: *Scotland; England.*

TEXT

MACBETH

ACT I

SCENE I. *A desert place*

Thunder and lightning. Enter three Witches[1].

First Witch. When shall we three meet again
In thunder, lightning, or in *rain*[2] ?

Second Witch. When the *hurlyburly's*[3] *done*[4].
When the battle's lost and won.

Third Witch. That will be *ere*[5] the set of sun.

First Witch. Where the place ?

Second Witch. Upon the *heath*[6]

Third Witch. There to meet with Macbeth.

First Witch. I come, *Graymalkin*[7] !

Second Witch. *Paddock*[8] calls.

Third Witch. *Anon*[9] !

All. Fair is foul, and foul is fair :
Hover[10] through the *fog*[11] and *filthy air*[12].

[*Exeunt*

SCENE II. *A camp near Forres*

Alarum[13] *within*[14]. *Enter* DUNCAN, MALCOLM DONALBAIN, LENNOX, *with* Attendants, *meeting a bleeding* Sergeant.

1. Also called 'Weird Sisters'—the fates.
2. Boisterous weather in which witches were supposed to be active.
3. Tumult and confusion.
4. Ended.
5. Before.
6. Tract of waste land
7. A demon cat.
8. A toad
9. At once.
10. Hang in air.
11. Mist.
12. Foul atmosphere
13. A summons to arm.
14. Off the stage.

PARAPHRASE OF MACBETH

ACT I

SCENE I. *A desolate place in North Scotland near Mory Firth.*

Weather is stormy—thunder and lightning. Three hideous looking supernatural old bearded women—Witches—appear on the stage.

First Witch. At what time are we going to meet again? Should we meet in thunder or in lightning or else in rain?

Second Witch. We should meet when the tumult of battle has subsided, and when victory is gained by one side and defeat by the other.

Third Witch. Such end of the battle will come before the sunset.

First Witch. Where should we meet?

Second Witch. Let us meet on the waste moorland.

Third Witch. There, at that plce we should meet Macbeth.

First Witch. [*Replying to the call of a spirit.*] I am just coming Graymalkin.

Second Witch. [*At the call of a spirit.*] I hear the call of Paddock.

Third Witch. I am reaching at once.

All Witches. [*Jointly.*] To us fair things are foul and foul things are fair. Let us now fly about in the heavy air ladden with thick fog.

[*They depart.*

SCENE. II *Royal camp near Forres*

Alarum within. Enter King DUNCAN, Princes MALCOLM AND DONALBAIN, LENNOX, *the* noblemen of Scotland *with* Attendant, *meeting a bleeding* Sergeant.

Duncan. What *bloody*[1] man is that? He can report,
As *seemeth*[2] by his *plight*[3], of the revolt.
The *newest*[4] *state*[5].
Malcolm. This is the sergeant.
Who like a good and hardy soldier, fought
'Gainst my *captivity*[6]. Hail, brave friend!
Say to the king the knowledge of the *broil*[7]
As thou *didst*[8] leave it.
Sergeant. *Doubtful*[9] it stood;
As two *spent*[10] swimmers, that do *cling*[11] together.
And *choke*[12] their *art*[13]. The merciless Macdonwald—
Worthy to be a rebel, *for to that*[14]
The multiplying *villanies*[15] of nature
Do *swarm*[16] upon him—from the western isles
Of *kerns*[17] and *gallowglasses*[18] is supplied;
And fortune, on his damned quarrel smiling,
Show'd like a *rebel's whore*[19]: but all's too weak:
For brave Macbeth—well he deserves that name—
Disdaining[20] fortune, with his *brandish'd steel*[21],
Which smoked with *bloody execution*,[22]
Like *valour's minion*[23] *carv'd*[24] out his passage
Till he faced the slave;
Which ne'er shook hands, nor bade farewell to him,
Till he *unseam'd*[25] him from the nave to the chaps

1. Soaked in blood.
2. Appears.
3. State; misery.
4. Latest.
5. Condition.
6. Arrest.
7. Battle.
8. You did.
9. Indecisive.
10. Exhausted.
11. Clasp.
12. Obstruct.
13. Skill of swimming.
14. Because to that end.
15. Increasing troubles.
16. Crowd.
17. Light-armed troops.
18. Heavy-armed troops.
19. Repugnant prostitute.
20. Hating
21. Flourished sword
22. Slaughter.
23. Favourite of bravery.
24. Cut out
25. Ripped open.

Duncan. Who is this man soaked in blood? It seems from his miserable appearance that he is coming direct from the battle front and may be able to inform us about the latest phase of the revolt.

Malcolm. This is the Sergeant, who fought bravely and loyally like a good soldier and saved me from being captured. [*Addressing the Sergeant*] You are welcome my brave friend! Give a report to the king about all that you know of the situation of the battle as it was when you left the field.

Sergeant. The course of battle remained undecided like the fate of two exhausted swimmers, who, when out of breath, clasp and embrace each other with their arms, and by thus thwarting each other's skill in swimming are both involved in danger of being drowned. The ruthless Macdonwald, who is indeed fit to be a traitor by nature—because all kinds of inborn wicked tendencies continually mutiply and combine themselves in him—is assisted by a supply of light armed troops and heavy armed cavalry from the Western Isles. It appeared at first that he was in a winning position, for the goddess of Fortune appeared to side and favour his cause like a false mistress. But all this proved of no avail because heroic Macbeth—we may call him so because he deserves that title—contemptuously ignoring favours displayed by Fortune to his adversary, proceeded forward with his brandished sword reeking with blood, to wield it so furiously in order to slaughter the enemy that it looked as if smoke was emitting out of it. So Macbeth cut his passage through the ranks and files of the enemy like a darling of the goddess of Courage, till he stood face to face with the villain Macdonwald. Once in front of him, he did not lose time in formalities of duel like shaking hands with him or bidding farewell to him, but ripped him open from the navel to the jaws

And fix'd his head upon our *battlements*.[1]

Duncan. O *valiant*[2] cousin ! worthy gentleman !

Sergeant. As whence the sun 'gins his reflection
Shipwrecking storms and direful thunders break ;
So from that spring, whence comfort seem'd to come,
Discomfort swells.[3] Mark, king of Scotland, mark .
No sooner justice had, with valour arm'd,
Compell'd these skipping *kerns*[4] to trust their heels,
But the Norweyan lord, *surveying vantage*.[5]
With *furbish'd*[6] arms and new supplies of men,
Began a fresh *assault*.[7]

Duncan. *Dismay'd*[8] not this
Our captains, Macbeth and Banquo ?

Sergeant. Yes ;
As sparrows eagles, or the hare the lion.
If I say *sooth*,[9] I must report they were
As cannons *overcharg'd*[10] with *double cracks*[11] ; so they
Doubly redoubled[12] *strokes*[13] upon the foe
Except they meant to *bathe*[14] in *reeking*[15] wounds,
Or *memorize*[16] another *Golgotha*,[17]
I cannot tell :—

1. Rampart.
2. Brave.
3. Danger threatens.
4. Light armed troops.
5. Seeing a favourite opportunity.
6. Polished.
7. Attack.
8. Disappointed.
9. Truth.
10. Overfilled.
11. Powerful charges.
12. Made four times strong.
13. Shots.
14. Dip.
15. Hot streaming.
16. Celebrate.
17. A place where Christ was crucified.

and then set up his head upon the rampart of our castle.

Duncan. O, my brave cousin—Macbeth! a worthy gentlemen you are!

Sergeant. Just as dreadfully thundering storms, which destroy ships, break forth usually from the east wherefrom the relieving sun begins its brilliant journey, so new dangers started from the same source, whence relief and help had come to the enemy. O King of Scotland please listen to what followed. As soon as our soldiers under Macbeth who is doubly armed with bravery and justice of his cause, beat back the light armed troops, the Norwegian King found a favourable chance and began a fresh attack with brightly polished arms and fresh supply of troops.

Duncan. Were not our commanders Banquo and Macbeth frightened at this unexpected attack?

Sergeant. Yes, they were I am sure, as eagles are frightened by sparrows or the lion is frightened by the hare. The truth is that they were like cannons loaded up with a double quantity of gun-powder, for they, with redoubled energy, showered blows upon their enemy. What they could mean by such a ruthless slaughter I cannot tell, but I may say this much that they must have wanted to bathe in enemy's blood or intended to make the battlefield as famous a place as Golgotha in respect of slaughter.

But I am *faint*,[1] my *gashes*[2] cry for help.

Duncan. So well thy words become thee as thy wounds;
They *smack*[3] of honour both. Go get him surgeons.

[*Exit Sergeant, attended.*

Who comes here?

Malcolm. The worthy Thane of Ross.

Lennox. What a haste looks through his eyes!
So should he look.
That seems to speak things strange.

Enter Ross

Ross. God save the king!

Dun. Whence camest thou, worthy thane?

Ross. From Fife, great king;
Where the Norweyan *banners flout*[4] the sky
And fan our people cold. Norway himself.
With *terrible numbers*[5],
Assisted by that most disloyal traitor
The thane of Cawdor, began a dismal *conflict*[6];
Till that Bellona's *bridegroom*,[7] *lapp'd*[8] *in proof*[9],
Confronted[10] him with *self-comparisons*[11],
Point against point rebellious, arm 'gainst arm
Curbing[12] his *lavish*[13] spirit: and, to conclude,
The victory fell on us.

1. Wanting in strength.
2. Deep wounds.
3. Suggest.
4. Military flags flap mockingly.
5. Awful multitude.
6. Horrible fight.
7. Beloved of goddess of war; brave person.
8. Covered up.
9. Impenetrable armour.
10. Encountered, faced.
11. Hand to hand fight.
12. Checking.
13. High wild.

But I feel I am fainting due to overflow of blood —my wounds require first-aid.

Duncan. The news which you have brought does as much credit to you as the wounds you have received in the battlefield, for both testify your honour. Go and let him be attended by doctors.

[*The Sergeant departs with attendants.*

Who is that man coming this way?

Malcolm. He is the noble thane of Ross.

Lennox. The expression in his eyes shows that he is in an unusal hurry. Such are always the looks of a man who has to communicate strange news.

Enter Ross

Ross. May God save the King!

Duncan. Where are you coming from noble thane?

Ross. Your Majesty I am coming from Fife, where the military banners of the Norwegian king are fluttering insultingly in our sky and chilling the hearts of our people with terror. The King of Norway, at the head of a huge army and assisted by the most disloyal traitor, the Thane of Cawdor, was fighting grimly till at last valiant Macbeth, bridegroom of Bellona, the goddess of War, clad completely in impregnable armour, met him face to face and matched him with equal strength and courage; opposing the rebel at every point and dealing him blow for blow, completely crushed down his pitching passions. To be brief, we have won victory in the battle against our foe.

Duncan. Great happiness!

Ross. *That*[1] *now.*
Sweno, the Norways' king, *craves composition*[2];
Nor would we *deign*[3] him burial of his men
Till he *disbursed*[4], at Saint Colme's inch,
Ten thousand dollars to our general use.

Duncan. No more that Thane of Cawdor shall deceive
Our *bosom interest*[5]: go pronounce his *present*[6] death,
And with his former title greet Macbeth

Ross. I'll see it done.

Duncan. *What*[7] he hath *lost*[8] noble Macbeth hath won.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE III. *A heath*

Thunder. Enter the three Witches

First Witch. Where hast thou been, sister?

Second Witch. Killing *swine*[9].

Third Witch. Sister, where thou?

First Witch. A sailor's wife had *chestnuts*[10] in her *lap*[11],
And *mounch'd*[12] and mounch'd, and mounch'd :—
"Give me," *quoth*[13] I:
"*Aroint*[14] thee, witch!" the *rump-fed*[15] *ronyon*[16] cries.

1. So that.
2. Humbly begs for terms of peace.
3. Permit.
4. Distributed.
5. Deep affections.
6. Immediate.
7. Title and property.
8. Forfeited.
9. Pigs.
10. An edible fruit
11. Hanging part of garment.
12. Chewed
13. Said.
14. Away.
15. Well nourished on pieces of meat.
16. Scabby old woman.

Duncan. It is highly happy news indeed !

Ross. The result is that Sweno, the King of Noryway, now humbly requests for terms of peace. We have decided not to permit him to bury the dead bodies of his soldiers, till he paid down ten thousand dollars at Saint Colme's Inch for distribution among our warriors.

Duncan. That Thane of Cawdor shall no more enjoy our royal trust in future. Go and proclaim that he should be condemned to death immediately, and that great Macbeth be awarded his former title of Thane of Cawdor.

Ross. I shall see that your Majesty's orders are executed immediately.

Duncan. The honours and title which the false Thane of Cawdor has lost by his treachery, have been won by noble Macbeth.

SCENE III. *A desert*

The sound of thunder. Enter three Witches.

First Witch. Where have you been so long, sister ?

Second Witch. I had been away killing pigs.

Third Witch. (*Addressing the First Witch*) Sister, where had you been all the time ?

First Witch. I had been to a sailor's wife, who was chewing chestnuts lying in her lap. I asked her for some, to which the fat ugly woman replied, 'Get away, witch.'

Her husband's to *Aleppo*[1] gone, *master of the Tiger*[2]:
But in a *sieve*[3] I'll *thither*[4] sail,
And, *like*[5] a rat without a tail,
I'll do, I'll do, and I'll do[6].

Second Witch. I'll give thee a *wind*[7].

First Witch. Thou art *kind*[8].

Third Witch. And I *another*[9].

First Witch. I myself have all the other;
And the very ports they blow,
All the *quarters*[10] that they know
I' the shipman's *card*[11].
I will drain him dry as *hay*[12]:
Sleep shall neither night nor day
Hang upon his pent-house *lid*[13];
He shall live a man *forbid*[14],
Weary se'n-nights nine times *nine*[15]
Shall he *dwindle*[16], peak and *pine*[17]:
Though his *bark*[18] cannot be lost

1. A capital town North-East of Tripoli.
2. Captain of the ship *Tiger*.
3. Utensil having holes in bottom.
4. There.
5. In the shape of.
6. I will gnaw a hole in the ship.
7. I will help you with wind.
8. Thank you.
9. Another wind.
10. Directions.
11. Mariner's compass.
12. Pull blood to make dry.
13. The lid of eye.
14. Cursed.
15. Eighty-one weeks.
16. Get reduced.
17. Grow bare.
18. Ship.

I know her husband is Captain of the vessel, *Tiger*, and has sailed to Alleppo. I have decided to go there in a sieve, and then transforming myself into the shape of a tailless rat, gnaw a hole through the rudder to put him to trouble.

cut, make

Second Witch. I shall help you with wind.

First Witch. For that I will be thankful to you.

Third Witch. I will supply you will another wind.

First Witch. I have under my command the rest of the winds. Moreover, I have control of the ports where these winds blow hard in all directions indicated in the mariner's compass. I shall drain away all blood from his body and make him as dry as hay. Sleep shall never visit his drooping eyelids in day or night. He shall live like a man under a curse and will continue to waste away for eighty-one weeks. Though I cannot sink his ship,

Yet it shall be *tempest-tost.*[1]
Look what I have.

Second Witch. Show me, show me.

First Witch. Here I have a pilot's thumb,
Wreck'd as homeward he did come. [*Drum within.*

Third Witch. A drum, a drum!
Macbeth doth come.

All. The *weird sisters*[2], hand in hand,
Posters[3] of the sea and land,
Thus do go about, about:
Thrice to thine, and thrice to mine,
And thrice again, to make up nine.
Peace[4]! the *charm's*[5] *wound up*[6].

Enter MACBETH *and* BANQUO

Macbeth. So *foul*[7] and fair a day I have not seen.

Banquo. How far is't call'd to Forres? What are these
So *wither'd*[8], and so *wild*[9] in their *attire*[10].
That look not like the inhabitants of the earth,
And yet are *on't*[11]? Live you? are you *aught*[12]
That man may question? You seem to understand me,
By each at once her *choppy*[13] finger laying
Upon her skinny lips: you should be women,
And yet your beards *forbid*[14] me to *interpret*[15]
That you are so.

1. Tossed about by storm.
2. Fatal sisters, having knowledge of destiny.
3. Speedy travellers.
4. Silence.
5. Magic spell.
6. Complete, ready to work.
7. Tempestuous.
8. Skinny
9. Grotesque.
10. Dress.
11. On earth.
12. Anything.
13. With cracked skin
14. Preven
15. Understand.

Yet [redacted] it will be tossed about by stormy winds. Look what I have got here with me?

Second Witch. Let me see it.

First Witch. I have got the thumb of a ship's pilot who was wrecked on the sea as he was sailing down homewards.

[*Sound of drum is heard off stage*]

Third Witch. I hear the sound of a drum. Macbeth is approaching.

All Witches. (*Jointly*) We the three fatal sisters who have power to travel swiftly over land and sea will now dance hand in hand round in a ring, nine times, three rounds for each one of us. Hush! The magic spell is now ready to work.

Enter MACBETH *and* BANQUO

Macbeth. (*To Banquo*) I have never seen so foul a day following such a bright sunshine.

Banquo. What do you think is the distance from here to Forres? But look! What are these fantastically haggard and grotesquely dressed creatures we see here? To me they do not look like earthly beings though they are on the earth itself. (*Addressing the witches*) Are you living beings or things with whom men may converse? It seems that you follow my words because each of you has put her withered finger on her thin lips as a sign of that. You look like women in your general appearance, but your beards prevent me from taking you as such.

Macbeth. Speak, if you can . what are you?

First Witch. All hail, Macbath! hail to thee Thane[1] of Glamis!

Second Witch. All hail, Macbeth! hail to thee, Thane of Cawdor!

Third Witch. All hail, Macbeth, that shalt be king hereafter!

Banquo. Good sir, why do you *start*[2]; and seem to fear
Things that do sound so *fair*[3]? I' the name of truth,
Are ye *fantastical*,[4] or that indeed
Which outwardly *ye*[5] show? My noble partner
You greet with present *grace*[6] and great *prediction*[7]
Of *noble having*[8] and of *royal hope*,[9]
That he seems *rapt*[10] *withal*[11] to me you speak not:
If you can look into the *seeds* of *time*,[12]
And say which grain will grow and which will not,
Speak then to me, who neither beg nor fear
Your favours nor your hate.

First Witch. Hail!

Second Witch. Hail!

Third Witch. Hail!

First Witch. Lesser than Macbeth, and greater,

Second Witch. Not so happy; yet much happier.

Third Witch. Thou shalt *get*[13] kings, though thou be none: So, all hail, Macbeth and Banquo!

First Witch. Banquo and Macbeth, all hail!

1. A rank.
2. Startle
3. Welcome.
4. Creatures of imagination.
5. You.
6. Title.
7. Great prophecy.
8. Great future distinctions.
9. Hope of throne.
10. Lost in thought.
11. Therewith.
12. Hidden tendencies of future.
13. Beget.

SCENE V. *Inverness, MACBETH's Castle*

Enter LADY MACBETH, *reading* MACBETH's *letter*

Lady Macbeth. (*Reads*) *"The witches met me on my way back the same day when I won victory against the rebels. I have learned on the strength of most reliable testimony that they possess superhuman knowledge. I was anxious to put forward more questions to them but they melted into air. While I stood absorbed in amazement at their sudden disappearance, messengers arrived from the king and greeted me as Thane of Cawdor, a title by which the fates had already addressed me. They had also predicted that I would be king in the near future. I think it proper to acquaint you with this fact because you are my dearest partner in any greatness that I might achieve. I send this happy news to you so that you may not be deprived of the joy by remaining ignorant of what great honour you are to share with me. Think over this matter in your heart deeply, and so farewell for the present."*

[*Aside*] You have already become Thane of Glamis as well as Thane of Cawdor and shall certainly become king, as predicted by the witches. Still I am afraid of the weak aspects in your character. You are too mild and generous to take the shortest cut to success. You wish to be great no doubt for you are not without ambition; but you want to fulfil it without ill means, crooked methods and unscrupulous acts. You like to achieve greatness by honest means like a saint. You do not like to employ foul means, and yet wish to win that which is wrong and criminal, without at the same time letting your hands be soiled with crime. O great Thane of Glamis, you are eager to win the crown which requires bold and foul action, but you are afraid of doing it yourself; though you would wish it to be done. Hasten to me so that I may infuse into you my courage and firmness, and by bold words whispered in your ears

And *chastise*[1] with the valour of my tongue
All that *impedes*[2] thee from the golden *round*[3],
Which fate and *metaphysical*[4] aid doth seem
To have thee crown'd withal.

Enter a Messenger.

What is your *tiding*[5]?

Messenger. The king comes here to-night.

Lady Macbeth. Thou'rt mad to say it:
Is not thy *master*[6] with him? who, were't so,
Would have infom'd for preparation.

Messenger. So please you, it is true: our thane is coming:
One of my fellows had the speed of him;
Who, almost dead for *breath*[7], had scarcely more
Than would make up his message.

Lady Macbeth. Give him *tending*[8];
He brings great n^ws. [*Exit Messenger.*
The *raven*[9] himself is hoarse
That *croaks*[10] the *fatal*[11] entrance of Duncan
Under my *battlements*[12]. Come, you spirits
That *tend on*[13] *mortal*[14] thoughts, *unsex*[15] me here,
And fill me, from the crown to the toe, *top-full*[16]
Of *direst*[17] cruelty! make thick my blood,
Stop up the *access*[18] and passage to *remorse*,[19]
That no compunctious *visitings*[20] of *nature*[21]
Shake my *fell*[22] purpose, nor keep peace between
The effect and it! Come to my women's breasts,
And take my milk for gall, you murdering *ministers*,[23]
Wherever in your sightless *substances*[24]
You *wait on*[25] nature's *mischief*[26]! Come, *thick*[27] night,

1. Drive away.
2. Hinders
3. Crown.
4. Supernatural.
5. News.
6. Macbeth
7. For want of breath.
8. Look after him.
9. Messenger.
10. Announces.
11. Fateful.
12. In my castle.
13. Serve.
14. Murderous.
15. Change sex.
16. Full to brim.
17. Extreme.
18. Approach.
19. Pity.
20. Prick of conscience.
21. Natural feeling.
22. Cruel.
23. Agents.
24. Invisible forms.
25. Ready to carry out.
26. Evil done in world.
27. Dark.

may put to flight all your moral scruples that stand as obstacles in the way of your seizing the crown, which you are destined by fate and supernatural agency to wear.

Enter a Messenger

(*To the Messenger*) What is the news you have brought ?

Messenger. The King will be coming here tonight.

Lady Macbeth. You must have gone mad to say so. (*Recovering herself*) Is not your master with the King ? If His Majesty, the King, was really coming here tonight, your master would certainly have sent me word to arrange a reception for him.

Messenger. Indeed your Ladyship, it is quite true. Our master is coming. One of my fellow messengers rode ahead of him so speedily that he is now almost out of breath, and has been able to deliver his message with much difficulty.

Lady Macbeth. Give him proper care. He has brought most important and welcome news.

[*Messenger departs*]

(*To herself*) Even the voice of the raven that announces the fateful entrance of Duncan into my castle is most hoarse. Let the spirits of evil, that inspire murderous thoughts, come and take away the natural womanly tenderness from my heart, and fill me completely from head to foot with fierce cruelty. Let the evil powers thicken my blood, and close the gates of passion and regret, so that no tender pangs of conscience may be able to divert me from my wicked design or prevent the accomplishment of my cruel purpose. O powers of evil, come and take away the sweet milk from my breasts and put sour poison in its place. O agents of murder, come away from the place where you might be now lying in wait for the destruction of nature in your invisible forms.

And *pall*[1] thee in the dunnest smoke of hell,
That my *kene*[2] knife see not the wound it makes.
Nor *heaven*[3] peep through the blanket of the dark,
To cry "Hold, hold !"

Enter MACBETH

Great Glamis ! worthy Cawdor !
Greater than both, by the all-hail hereafter !
Thy letters have transported me beyond
This *ignorant*[4] present, and I feel now
The future in the instant.

Macbeth. My dearest love,
Duncan comes here to night.

Lady Macbeth. And when goes *hence*[4]

Macbeth. To-morrow, as he purposes.

Lady Macbeth. O, never
Shall sun that morrow see !
Your face, my thane, is as a book where men
May read strange matters : to beguile the *time*[6],
Look like the time ; bear welcome in your eye,
Your hand, your tongue : look like the innocent flower,
But be the serpent under't. *He*[7] that's coming
Must be provided *for*[8] : and you shall put
This night's great business into my *dispatch*[9] ;
Which shall to all our nights and days to come
Give solely sovereign *sway*[10] and masterdom.

1. Cover.
2. Sharp.
3. Heavenly powers.
4. Obscure.
5. From here.
6. To deceive the world.
7. Duncan
8. Killed.
9. Management.
10. Complete imperial power

Let densely dark night also come wrapping iself in thickest smoke of hell, so that I may not see the wounds that my sharp knife may inflict, nor the gods may look from the canopy of darkness, and bid me to abstain from committing murder.

Enter MACBETH

(*To Macbeth*) Here you are my great thane of Glamis ! Noble thane of Cawdor ! Greater you are than one enjoying both of these titles, for you are destined to royal dignity in future. Your letters have carried me away from the present into the glories of unknown future of which people have no knowledge. I already feel this very instant the future greatness which awaits us.

Macbeth. O my dearest wife, king Duncan is coming here tonight to stay with us in our castle.

Lady Macbeth. And when does he propose to depart ?

Macbeth. He will depart tomorrow according to his programme.

Lady Macbeth. The tomorrow which might see Duncan leave this place alive shall never come. But I mark that your face is betraying the conscious thoughts that are hovering in your mind and I am sure that everyone may read them as in a book. I advise you that, in order to hoodwink and deceive people, you must assume looks that may befit situation and circumstances. Let your looks, words and behaviour be such as to appear bidding cordial welcome to all in a most hospitable way. You must apparently look like an innocent flower, but must at the same time be like a serpent hidden under it. We must make all necessary preparations for the person visiting us tonight. You must entrust to me the execution of this night's great task, which if done successfully, will bring to us supreme royal authority, to be enjoyed by us through the rest of our lives.

Macbeth. We will speak further.
Lady Macbeth. Only look up clear ;
To alter favour ever is to fear :
Leave all the rest to me. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE VI. *Before* MACBETH'S *castle*

Hautboys. Servants of MACBETH *attending with torches.*

Enter DUNCAN, MALCOLM, DONALBAIN, BANQUO, LENNOX, MACDUFF, ROSS, ANGUS, *and* Attendants.

Duncan. This castle hath a pleasant *seat*[1] ; the air
Nimbly[2] and sweetly *recommends*[3] itself
Unto our gentle senses.
Banquo. This guest of summer,
The temple-haunting martlet, does *approve*[4],
By his loved *mansionary*[5], that the heavens' *breath*[6]
Smells *wooingly*[7] here : no *jutty*[8], frieze,
Buttress, nor *coign*[9] of vantage, but this bird
Hath made his *pendent*[10] *bed*[11] and procreant cradle :
Where they most breed and *haunt*,[12] I have observed
The air is *delicate*[13].

Enter LADY MACBETH

Duncan. See, see, our honour'd hostess !
The love that follows us sometime is our trouble,
Which still we thank as love. *Herein*[14] I *teach*[15] you
How you shall bid God 'ild us for your pains,
And thanks us for your trouble.

1. Situation.
2. Briskly
3. Pleases
4. Proves
5. Abode.
6. Air.
7. Invitingly.
8. Ledge.
9. Corner.
10. Hanging.
11. Nest.
12. Frequent.
13. Fine.
14. By this example.
15. Instruct.

Macbeth. We shall have further talk touching this matter in future.

Lady Macbeth. Please do not look so troubled and be careful to remember that changed countenance is always a sign of fear. Do not betray yourself by your looks, and leave the rest to me.

Exeunt.

SCENE VI. *Before* MACBETH'S *Castle*

Flutes. Enter DUNCAN, MALCOLM, DONALBAIN, BANQUO, LENNOX, MACDUFF, ROSS, ANGUS *and* attendants.

Duncan. The situation of this castle is highly delightful. The wind that blows here is fresh and pleasant, and has a soothing effect on our mind.

Banquo. This summer bird, house-martin, that loves to build nests under the projecting caves of churches, buids them here every year and this fact proves that the wind is pure, sweet and delicious at this place. There is no projection, no cornice, no pillar supporting the wall, or any other convenient corner where this bird has not built its hanging nest to lay eggs and to breed its young ones. I have often noticed that wherever these birds flock and have their nests, the atmos- here is invariably sweet and fine.

Enter LADY MACBETH

Duncan. Look, here comes our noble hostess. Sometimes the love of our friends is a source of annoyance to us because it causes trouble to them, but still we feel grateful for it because after all it proves deep affection. So you should pray God for divine blessing on us and also thank us for the vexation and trouble we are giving you by our visit, because all this trouble springs only from love.

Lady Macbeth. All our service
In every point twice done, and then done double,
Were poor and single business to contend[1]
Against[2] those honours deep and broad wherewith
Your majesty loads our house: for those of old,
And the late dignities heap'd up to them,
We rest your hermits.

Duncan. Where's the thane of Cawdor?
We *coursed him*[3] at the heels, and had a purpose
To be his *purveyor*[4] but he rides well;
And his great love, sharp as his spur, hath *holp*[5] him
To his home before us. Fair and noble hostess,
We are your guest to-night.

Lady Macbeth. Your servants ever
Have theirs, themselves, and what is theirs, in *compt*[6],
To make their audit at your highness' pleasure,
Still to return your own.

Duncan. Give me your hand;
Conduct me to mine *host*[7] we love him highly,
And shall continue our graces towards him
By your leave, hostess.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE VII. MACBETH'S *castle*

Hautboy's[8] *and torches. Enter a Sewer*[9], *and divers*[10] Servants *with dishes and service, and pass over the stage. Then enter* MACBETH.

1. Is comparatively weak.
2. If put against.
3. Followed him.
4. Domestic officer who makes arrangements for board and lodging.
5. Helped.
6. Accountable.
7. Macbeth.
8. Flutes.
9. Chief servant at banquet
10. Various

Lady Macbeth. Whatever the services that my husband and I might render to your Majesty, done twice over in detail and even four times, would be too poor and insignificant, when matched with the great honour you are conferring on us by your visit. My husband and I feel deeply obliged to you and do always pray like beadsmen for your Majesty's welfare in remembrance of all the honours you have bestowed upon us now as well as the past with royal generosity.

King Duncan resemble father

Duncan. Where is the thane of Cawdor ? We closely followed him at great speed and had wished to reach his castle before him like a herald but a good rider as he is, he rides too fast, and his great love for us has acted as a spur to put him to greater speed due to which he reached his home ahead of us. Fair and noble hostess, we intend to stay here as your guest tonight.

Lady Macbeth. We, with all our servants, ourselves and our belongings, are ever ready to render service to your Majesty. We keep all our belongings as steward on behalf of your Majesty so that wherever you will choose to order us to submit a full statement of accounts, we shall be only returning to you what belongs to you.

Imp

Duncan. Give me your hand and conduct me to your husband, we regard him with high love and esteem and shall continue to bestow our favours on him in future. Let us proceed with your permission noble hostess.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE VII. *Macbeth's Castle*

Enter servants playing on flutes and carrying torches. Enter a Chief Butler, and other servants with dishes and things to be served at the banquet. They pass over the stage. Then enters Macbeth.

Macbeth. If it were done when 'tis done, then 'twere well
It were done quickly : If the *assassination*[1]
Could trammel *up*[2] the consequence, and catch,
With his *surcease*[3], success, that but this *blow*[4]
Might be the be-all and the end-all here,
But here, upon this bank and shoal of time,
We'ld jump the life to come. But in these cases
We still have judgment here ; that we but teach
Bloodly instructions[5], which being taught return
To *plague*[6] the inventor : this *even handed*[7] justice
Commends[8] the *ingredients*[9] of of our poison'd *chalice*[10]
To our own lips. He's here in double trust :
First, as I am his kinsman and his subject,
Strong both against the deed ; then, as his host,
Who should against his murderer shut the door,
Not bear the knife myself. Besides, this Duncan
Hath borne his faculties so meek, hath been
So *clear*[11] in his great office, that his virtues
Will plead like angels, trumpet-tongu'd, against
The deep damnation of his taking-off ;
And pity, like a naked new-born babe,
Striding the blast, or heaven's *cherubin*,[12] horsed
Upon the *sightless couriers*[13] of the air,
Shall blow the horrid deed in every eye,
Theat tears shall down the wind. I have no *spur*[14]
To prick the sides of my *intent*[15], but only
Vaulting[16] ambition, which o'erleaps itself
And falls on the other.

1. Murder.
2. Completely. arrest.
3. Conclusion.
4. This single act of murder.
5. Lessons of bloodshed.
6. Trouble
7. Impartial.
8. Offer.
9. Contents.
10. Cup.
11. Faultless.
12. Angel.
13. Invisible winds.
14. Incentive.
15. Purpose
16. Leaping high.

Macbeth. If Duncan's murder came to be smoothly executed at a stroke without further repercussions and serious consequences, then it would be better if it is done as soon as possible. If the assassination were a self-contained and complete act without being followed by any terrible consequences in this life, if it could bring me success with Duncan's death, if this act of murder ended in itself without stirring up a series of results likely to follow naturally then standing, as I do, on the brink of this wordly life, I am ready to take the risk of punishment in the next world. But in such cases there is the risk of punishment even in this world, because we set examples to others, and the lesson of murder we teach is at last practised on the inventor himself. This impartial justice offers to us the cup of wine mixed with poison that we prepared for others. The king Duncan is here in a position with a double claim to security because, in the first place, I am both his relative and subject, so that each of these facts is a strong argument against murder; while in the second place I am his host, and as such, instead of attacking him myself, I should rather protect him against every murderous design. Moreover, Duncan has exercised royal powers and privileges so kindly and has been such a blameless and perfect ruler, that his virtues would shout aloud condemning the sin of his murder. An obvious result will be that universal pity will be left for him. In fact pity, like a pure spotless child or like a heavenly angel which is riding on the wind, will carry the news of this terrible deed to all the world, and bring tears to every eye. I have no incentive to urge me on to the deed except my inordinate ambition which goes on too far and may at last bring me to grief.

Enter LADY MACBETH

How now! what news?

Lady Macbeth. He has almost *supp'd*[1] who have you left the chamber?

Macbeth. Hath he ask'd for me?

Lady Macbeth. Know you not he has?

Macbeth. We will proceed no further in this business:
He hath honour'd me of late; and I have *bought*[2]
Golden opinions from all sorts of people,
Which would be worn now in their newest *gloss*,[3]
Not cast aside so soon.

Lady Macbeth. Was the hope drunk
Wherein you dress'd yourself? hath it slept since?
And wakes it now, to look so green and pale
At what it did so freely? From this time
Such I account thy love. Art thou afeard
To be the same in thine own act and valour
As thou art in desire? Wouldst thou have that
Which thou esteem'st the ornament of *life*[4]
And live a coward in thine own easteem,
Letting "I dare not" wait upon "I would,"
Like the poor cat i' the *adage*[5]?

Macbeth. *Prithee*,[6] peace:
I dare do all that may become a man;
Who dares do more is none.

1. Taken his supper.
2. Acquired.
3. Shine.
4. Crown
5. Proverb
6. Pray, please.

Enter LADY MACBETH

Well, what's the news ?

Lady Macbeth. The king has almost finished his supper. Why did you leave his chamber ?

Macbeth. Has he enquired about me ?

Lady Macbeth. Don't you know that he has ?

Macbeth. We will not proceed in this business of murder any more. He has recently conferred new honours upon me, and I am held in high esteem by all sections of my countrymen and would rather retain these honours in their original glamour and brightest form, instead of casting them away so soon.

Lady Macbeth. Were you drunk to indulge in kindly hope which you so eagerly cherished like a boastful drunkard ? Has that ambition of yours been sleeping since to work off the intoxication ? It seems as if your hope now after being awakened looks green and pale with fear at the plans which were prepared by you freely under its influence. From now onwards I shall regard your love as fickle as your hope. Are you afraid to be as bold in your action as you are in your ambitious desire to secure the crown ? Will you wish to have the royal power, which you have set before yourself as a glorious goal of your life, and set remain in your own opinion as a coward ? Will you behave like the proverbial cat (which wished to eat fish without letting her feet get wet) and let your fear stop you from putting into practice that which you desire so eagerly ?

Macbeth. I beg you to stop taunting. I have guts enough to do all that any man can do. I declare that there is no one who may dare to do more than I may.

Macbeth is not willing to put the King to dea[th]

Lady Macbe[th] goes on big[?] to persuade him for the execution o[f] the task.

I hope to rise but I fear to fall.

Lady Macbeth What beast was't then,
That made you *break*[1] this enterprise to me ?
When you durst do it, then you were a man ;
And, to be more than what you were, you would
Be so much more the man. Nor time nor place
Did then *adhere*,[2] and yet you would make both :
They have made themselves, and that their fitness now
Does unmake you. I have given suck, and know
How tender 'tis to love the babe that milks me :
I would, while it was smiling in my face,
Have pluck'd my nipple from his boneless gums,
Aand dash'd the brains out, had I so sworn as you
Have done to this.

Macbeth. If we should fail ?

Lady Macbeth. We fail !
But screw your courage to the sticking-place,
And we'll not fail. When Duncan is asleep—
Whereto the rather shall his day's hard journey
Soundly invite him—his two *chamberlains*[3]
Will I with wine and *wassail*[4] so *convince*,[5]
That memory, the *warder*[6] of the brain,
Shall be a fume, and the receipt of reason
A *limbeck*[7] only : when in swinish sleep
Their *drenched*[8] natures lie as a death,
What cannot you and I perform upon
The unguarded Duncan ? what not put upon
His spongy *officers*,[9] who shall bear the guilt
Of our great *quell* ?[10]

1. Disclose.
2. Suit.
3. Officers of the King's Chamber.
4. Merry-making.
5. Overcome.
6. Guardian.
7. Gas reservoir.
8. Drenched with wine.
9. Drunk officers.
10. Slaughter, murder

Lady Macbeth. If being such a man you are now unwilling to act, you must have been possessed by some beast when you first suggested the plan to me. When you had the courage to form the enterprise you well deserved the name of man and if you could actually do it now you would be a still braver man. At the time of your first suggestion there was neither favourable occasion not proper place for your project and you were yet resolved to create both. But now that a unique opportunity has presented itself, you are showing nervousness like cowards. I have sucked a baby at my breast and so I know the depth of motherly love for the child who sucks my nipple, yet I would not have hesitated to honour my oath even if it required me to snatch away my nipple from the soft gums of my innocently smiling baby and to dash his brains out, if I had sworn to that effect as you did in relation to this matter.

Macbeth. But what if we should fail in this enterprise?

Lady Macbeth. It is pitiable that you think of failure. There can be no such question if you just summon up your courage and make it stand firm. Duncan has done a day's hard journey, and he will naturally fall soundly asleep very soon. While he is so asleep, I will so thoroughly overpower his bedroom officers with drink and merriment that their memory which keeps guard over the mind shall be clouded, and their reason shall be thrown into complete disorder. When they would be sleeping like pigs, what cannot both of us do to the unguarded king Duncan? Will it be difficult to falsely blame these drunken officers with the guilt of the crime of murder committed by us?

Macbeth. Bring forth men-children only;
For thy *undaunted*[1] *mettle*[2] should compose
Nothing but males. Will it not be *received*,[3]
When we have mark'd with blood those sleepy two
Of his own chamber, and used their very daggers.
That they have done't?

Lady Macbeth. Who dares receive it other,
As we shall make our griefs and clamour roar
Upon his death?

Macbeth. I am settled, and bend up
Each *corporal agent*[4] to this terrible feat.
Away, and mock the *time*[5] with fairest show:
False face must hide what the false heart doth know.

[*Exeunt*

1. Courageous.
2. Disposition.
3. Accepted
4. Limb of the body
5. Before the world.

ACT II

SCENE I. *Inverness. Court of Macbeth's castle.*

Enter BANQUO, *and* FLEANCE *bearing a torch before him.*

Banquo. How goes the *night*[6], boy?

Fleance. The moon is down; I have not heard the clock.

Banquo. And she goes down at twelve.

Fleance. I take't, 'tis later, sir.

Banquo. Hold, take my sword. There's *husbandry*[7] in heaven.
Their *candles*[8] are all out. Take thee that too.
A heavy *summons*[9] lies like lead upon me.
And yet I would not sleep. Merciful powers,
Restrain in me the *cursed*[10] thoughts that nature

6. What is the time.
7. Economy.
8. Stars.
9. Invitation to sleep.
10. Evil.

Macbeth. Being a brave woman you should give birth to male children only because your indomitable courage should breed nothing but males. When after murdering the King with the daggers of the two sleeping Chamberlains we smear them with bood, will it not be generally believed that it were they who did the deed ?

Lady Macbeth. Who can have courage to believe otherwise when at the discovery of murder we set ourselves to express our grief and indignation with proper stress and emphasis ?

Macbeth. I have now resolved to do the deed and will strain every faculty of my body to do this terrible crime. Let us come away and delude people with false cheerfulness. Mock appearance must hide the treacherous designs in our heart.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT II

SCENE I. *Inverness, Courtyard of Macbeth's castle.*

Enter BANQUO, *and* FLEANCE *holding a torch before him.*

Banquo. How much night has passed, my son ?

Fleance. I am not sure because the moon has already set ; and I have not heard the chiming of the clock.

Banquo. The moon sets at twelve.

Fleance. It is then later than twelve, I suppose.

Banquo. Wait, take this sword of mine. (Looking up) The heaven appears economical, for all its candle-like twinkling stars are out. Take this also (*hands over a part of his armour to his son.*) I am feeling much sleep but I would not let myself fall asleep. O merciful powers of heaven check in me the flow of thoughts which attack my weak human nature whenever I am resting.

Gives way to in repose! Give me my sword.
Who's there?

Enter Macbeth, *and a* servant *with a torch.*

Macbeth. A friend.

Banquo. What, sir, not yet at rest? The king's a *bed*[1] :
He hath been in unusual pleasure, and
Sent forth great *largess*[2] to your *offices*[3] :
This diamond he greets your wife withal,
By the name of most kind hostess; and *shut up*[4]
In measureless content.

Macbeth. Being unprepared,
Our will became the servant to defect;
Which else should free have wrought.

Banquo. All's well.
I dreamt last night of the three weird sisters:
To you they have show'd some truth.

Macbeth. I think not of them:
Yet, when we can *entreat*[5] an hour to serve,
We would spend it in some words upon that business,
If you would grant the time.

Banquo. At your kind'st *leisure*[6]

Macbeth. If you shall *cleave*[7] to my consent, when 'tis,
It shall make honour for you.

Banquo. So I lose none
In seeking to *augment*[8] it, but still keep
My bosom *franchised*[9] and *allegiance*[10] *clear*[11]
I shall be *counsell'd*[12].

1. Gone to bed.
2. Presents, gifts.
3. Servants' quarters.
4. Wrapped up.
5. Spare.
6. Whenever it suits you.
7. Stick to.
8. Increase.
9. Free.
10. Loyalty
11. Unstained.
12. Advised

Give me my sword. [*Loudly*] who comes there ?

Enter MACBETH, *and a* servant *with a torch*

Macbeth. A friend.

Banquo. How is it, sir, that you are not in bed as yet ? The king has retired to bed. He has been exceedingly pleased and has sent a liberal sum of money for distribution among your servants as a reward. He has sent this diamond through me as a gift for your wife, whom he called a most kind hostess. Now he has retired to his sleeping chamber with perfect satisfaction and peace of mind.

Macbeth. As we were not properly prepared for this great reception, we were obliged to submit to defective arrangements. If we had more time for preparation, we should have arranged better for a fitting reception of the king.

Banquo. Never mind, it is all quite well done. Last night I dreamt of the three witches. In your case their predictions have proved true to some extent.

Macbeth. At present I do not think of them. Anyhow, we will discuss that matter at some spare hour provided you agree to give me that much of your time.

Banquo. I shall be at your kind disposal whenever it might be convenient to you.

Macbeth. If you act on my plans when I have formed them, you will gain more honours.

Banquo. I am prepared to abide by your counsel, if I am not called upon to do anything dishonourable in trying to attain honour. Only if I can keep my conscience free and my loyalty to the king untarnished, I will act on your advice.

Macbeth. Good *repose*[1] the while !

Banquo. Thanks, sir : the like to you !

[*Exeunt Banquo and Fleance.*

Macbeth. Go bid thy mistress, when my drink is redy,
She strike upon the bell. Get thee to bed.

Exit Servant.

Is this a dagger which I see before me,
The handle toward my hand ? Come, let me clutch thee :
I have thee not, and yet I see thee still.
Art thou not, fatal *vision*[2] sensible
To feeling as to sight ? or art thou but
A dagger of the *mind*[3], a false creation,
Proceeding from the heat-oppressed brain ?
I see thee yet, in form as palpable.
As this which now I draw.
Thou *marshall'st*[4] me the way that I was going ;
And such an instrument I was to use.
Mine eyes are made the *fools*[5] o' the other senses,
Or else worth all the rest : I see the still ;
And on thy blade and *dudgeon*[6] *gouts*[7] of blood,
Which was not so before. There's no such thing :
It is the bloody business which informs
Thus to mine eyes. Now o'er the one half-world.
Nature seems dead and wicked dreams abuse
The curtain'd sleep ; *witchcraft*[8] celebrates
Pale *Hecate's*[9] offerings ; and wither'd murder,
Alarum'd [10] by his sentinel, the wolf,

1. Sound sleep.
2. Mortal. imaginings.
3. Imaginary.
4. Leads.
5. Laughing stock.
6. Handle
7. Drops.
8. Witches
9. Pale coloured goddess of under-world.
10. Awakened.

Macbeth. I wish you good rest in the meantime.

Banquo. Thank you, sir, I also wish the same to you. [*Exeunt Banquo and Fleance*

Macbeth. [*To the servant*] Go and tell your mistress to ring the bell when my drink is ready. You may go to bed now. [*Exit servant*]

[*Looking in vacuum*] Is this a real dagger that I see hanging before me with its handle turned towards my hand? Come near me so that I may hold you in my hand.

[*Failing to catch the dagger*] I have not been able to catch you, yet I see you there even now. Are you not merely a terrible vision of a deadly weapon capable of being perceived by the sense of sight and not by that of touch? Or are you a mere hallucination—a dagger existing only in my imagination, an unreal image, and a creation of my over-excited fancy? I see you even now as if you have as substantial a form as this one [drawing out his own dagger] which I draw out now. You lead me to the place I was about to go. The weapon, which I was going to use for the commission of the offence was just like you in shape. Either you do or do not exist so that if you do not exist, then my eyes are deluded, and are therefore more foolish than my other senses; but if you do exist then my eyes see correctly, and are therefore more reliable than my other senses. I see you even now and mark that there are on your blade and hilt drops of blood which were not there before. No, I am sure that the dagger which hangs before me is not real. It is only my murderous designs which have called up this horrible vision before my eyes. At this time of night over half the world all creatures are asleep and wicked dreams disturb the mind of the persons sleeping in their curtained beds. Witches assemble to make sacrifices to their pale goddess, Hecate and the ghostly-faced murderer is roused to activity by his watchman, the wolf,

Whose *howl's his watch*[1], thus with his stealthy pace,
With *Tarquin's*[2] ravishing strides, towards his design
Moves like a ghost. Thou sure and firm-set earth,
Hear not my steps, which way they walk, for fear
Thy very stones prate of my whereabout,
And take the present horror from the time,
Which now suits with *it*[3]. Whiles I threat, he lives :
Words to the heat of deeds too cold breath gives.
[*A bell rings.*
I go, and it is done ; the bell invites me.
Hear it not, Duncan ; for it is a *knell*[4].
That summons thee to heaven or to hell.
[*Exit*

SCENE II. *The same*

Enter Lady MACBETH

Lady Macbeth. That which hath made them drunk hath made me bold ;
What hath *quench'd them*[5] hath given me fire. Hark ! Peace !
It was the owl that shriek'd, the fatal *bellman*[6],
Which gives the *stern'st*[7] good-night. He is about *it* :[8]
The doors are open ; and the *surfeited*[9] grooms
Do mock their *charge*[10] with snores : I have drugg'd their *possets*,[11]
That death and nature do contend about them,
Whether they live or die.
Macbeth. [*Within*] Who's there ? what, ho !

1. Tells time.
2. Tarquinus Sextus, son of Tarquinus Superbus, the last legendary king of Rome.
3. "Time"
4. Death-bell.
5. Destroyed their courage.
6. One who predicts death.
7. Grimmest.
8. Murder.
9. Overdrunk.
10. Person under their care.
11. A night drink.

who keeps his watch by howling throughout the night. He moves stealthily like a ghost to his victim, in the same way as Tarquin walked towards the bed chamber of Lucretia in order to ravish her. O, stable and solid earth, do not hear the noise of my footsteps, while I am walking because I fear that the very stones should, by their echoes, tell of my movement and speak of my whereabouts by depriving the night of that horrible silence which befits the terrible deed which I am going to commit this moment. So long as I merely plan to kill Duncan, he lives. Words of threat are but lifeless substitutes for the enthusiasm which should accompany the performance of the deed. [*A bell rings*]

This signal bell is calling me and, as soon as I go, the deed will be done. O Duncan, do not hear the bell because it is in fact your funeral bell that summons you either to heaven or to hell.

[*Exit*]

SCENE II. *The same courtyard*

Enter Lady MACBETH

Lady Macbeth. The wine which has intoxicated Duncan's servants has emboldened me; so that the thing which has deprived them of their senses has infused new spirit in me. Listen! what is that noise! It was only the hooting of an owl—it seems to bid grimmest farewell to Duncan just as the bellman does when he visits a condemned man before the hour of his death. My husband must be about to do the deed now. The doors are open and the intoxicated guards of the king's bed chamber are snoring fast asleep, having no senses to do their duty. I mixed an intense sleep-inducing drug with their drinks so that there is going on now a struggle within them between life and death and it is uncertain whether they will survive or die.

Macbeth. [*From within*]. Who is there? What noise is that?

Lady Macbeth. *Alack*[1], I am afraid they have awaked,
And 'tis not done: the attempt and not the deed
Confounds[2] us. Hark! I laid their daggers ready;
He could not miss 'em. Had he not resembled
My father as he slept, I had done't.

Enter MACBETH

My husband!

Macbeth. I have done the deed. Didst thou not hear a noise?

Lady Macbeth. I heard the owl scream and the crickets cry.
Did not you speak?

Macbeth. When?

Lady Macbeth. Now?

Macbeth. As I descended?

Lady Macbeth. *Ay.*[3]

Macbeth. Hark!
Who *lies*[4] i' the second chamber?

Lady Macbeth. Donalbain.

Macbeth. This is a sorry sight.

[*Looking on his hands.*

Lady Macbeth. A foolish thought, to say a sorry sight.

Macbeth. There's one did laugh in's sleep, and one cried "Murder!"
That they did wake each other: I stood and heard them:
That they did say their prayers, and *address'd them*[5]
Again to sleep.

Lady Macbeth. There are two *lodg'd together.*[6]

Macbeth. One cried "God bless us!" and "Amen!" the other;
As[7] they had seen me with hangman's hands.
Listening *their fear*,[8] I could not say "Amen!"
When they did say "God bless us!"

1. Alas.
2. Is sure to ruin.
3. Yes.
4. Sleeps.
5. Prepared themselvee.
6. Staying together.
7. As if.
8. Fear-stricken words.

Lady Macbeth. Alas, I am afraid they have been awakened and the deed has not been done successfully. If the attempt has not succeeded it will be a ruinous thing for us. Listen ! there is some noise there. I had placed their daggers ready at hand and he could not have possibly missed them. If Duncan had not resembled my father when I saw him sleeping, I would have myself done the deed.

Enter MACBETH

My husband !

Macbeth. I have killed Duncan. Did you not hear a noise ?

Lady Macbeth. I heard the shrieking of an owl and the chriping of the crickets. Did you not speak?

Macbeth. When ?

Lady Macbeth. Just now.

Macbeth. When I was coming down ?

Lady Macbeth. Yes.

Macbeth. Listen ! What sound is that ? Who is sleeping in the chamber adjoining that of Duncan?

Lady Macbeth. Donalbain.

Macbeth. [*Looking at his hands*]. Blood on my hands presents a very wretched sight.

Lady Macbeth. It is foolish to say that it is a sad sight.

Macbeth. I heard when I stood still that one of the sleeping persons laughed in his sleep and the other cried 'Murder !' so that I felt as if they awakened each other. I kept standing still and tried to hear what they said, but soon found that they merely said their prayers and then went to sleep again.

Lady Macbeth. There are two men sleeping together in the chamber next to that of Duncan.

Macbeth. One of those persons cried, 'God bless us,' and the other responded, 'Be it so,' as if they had seen me with these bloody hands which befit only a murderer. When I stood listening to their cries of fear, I could not utter the word 'Amen,' when they spoke the words 'God bless us.'

Lady Macbeth. Consider it not so deeply.

Macbeth. But *wherefore*[1] could not I pronounce "Amen"?
I had most need of blessing, and "Amen"
Stuck in my throat.

Lady Macbeth. These deeds must not be thought
After these ways; so, it will make us mad.

Macbeth. *Methought*[2] I heard a voice cry "Sleep no more!
Macbeth does murder sleep,"—the innocent sleep,
Sleep that knits up the *ravell'd*[3] sleave of care,
The death of each day's life, sore labour's bath,
Balm[4] of hurt minds, great nature's second course,
Chief nourisher in life's feast,—

Lady Macbeth. What do you mean?

Macbeth. Still it cried "Sleep no more!" to all the house:
"Glamis hath murder'd sleep, and therefore Cawdor
Shall sleep no more: Macbeth shall sleep no more!"

Lady Macbeth. Who was it that thus cried? Why, worthy thane,
You do *unbend*[5] your noble strength, to think
So *brainsickly*[6] of things. Go get some water,
And wash this *filthy witness*[7] from your hand.
Why did you bring these daggers from the place?
They must lie there: go carry them, and *smear*[8]
The sleepy grooms with blood.

Macbeth I'll go no more:
I am afraid to think what I have done;

1. Why.
2. I thought.
3. Knotted.
4. Sleep which soothes the mind.
5. Relax.
6. Madly.
7. Dirty evidence, *i.e.*, blood
8. Besmear.

Lady Macbeth. You should not take these things as having any deep signficance.

Macbeth. I cannot understand why I was not able to utter the word 'Amen,' at a moment when I was most in need of God's blessings at that moment. I tried but could not pronounce the word.

Lady Macbeth. You should not think so deeply of these things because that will drive us mad.

Macbeth. I felt as if I heard a voice cry, 'Sleep no more ! Macbeth is murdering sleep'—the innocent sleep which sets us free from all cares and anxieties, and smoothens out cares, and which ends each day's active life, and does also refresh the exhausted body and mind—sleep which is a restorative agent for wounded minds, nature's best gift which nourishes the body,—

Lady Macbeth. I do not understand what you do mean by all this talk ?

Macbeth. The voice continued to cry 'Sleep no more' and these words echoed throughout the house that 'Glamis has murdered sleep and therefore Cawdor shall sleep no more : Macbeth will not be able to sleep any more !'

Lady Macbeth. Who was it to cry like that ? O my noble Lord, why are you giving way to disgraceful weakness by indulging yourself in such morbid fancies. Go, get some water, and wash from your hands these stains of blood which bear witness against you. Why have you brought these daggers along with you from the chamber ? They must be thrown in the same room. Go, take them back and smear the sleeping chamberlains with blood immediately.

Macbeth. I will not go there again. I shudder even to think of the hideous crime which I have committed.

Contemptible action

Look on't again I dare not.

Lady Macbeth. *Infirm of purpose*[1] !
Give me the daggers : the sleeping and the dead
Are but as pictures : 'tis the eye of childhood
That fears a painted devil. If he do bleed,
I'll *gild*[2] the faces of the grooms withal,
For it must seem their guilt.

[*Exit. Knocking within.*]

Macbeth. *Whence*[3] is that knocking ?
How is't with me, when every noise appals me ?
What hands are here ? ha ! they pluck out mine eyes !
Will all great *Neptune's*[4] ocean wash this blood
Clean from my hand ? No ; this my hand will rather
The *multitudinous*[5] seas *incarnadine*,[6]
Making the green one red.

Re-enter Lady Macbeth

Lady Macbeth. My hands are of your colour ; but I shame
To wear a heart so *white*[7]. [*Knocking within.*] I hear a knocking
At the south *entry*[8] : *retire we*[9] to our chamber :
A little water clears us of this deed :
How easy is it, then ! Your *constancy*[10]
Hath left you unattended. [*Knocking within.*] Hark ! more knocking :
Get on your *nightgown*[11], lest occasion calls us,
And show us to be watchers : be not lost
So *poorly*[12] in your thoughts.

Macbeth. To know my deed, 'twere best not know myself. [*Knocking within.*]

1. Lacking determination.
2. Cover with blood.
3. From where.
4. Sea god.
5. Measureless.
6. Make red.
7. Cowardly.
8. Door.
9. Let us retire.
10. Firmness.
11. Dressing gown.
12. Weakly.

I have not the courage even to look at the dead body again.

Lady Macbeth. I feel pity at your irresolution ! Give me the daggers. Sleeping and dead men are no more to be feared than mere pictures. Only children may feel frightened by looking on a painted pictue of a devil. If Duncan is still bleeding I will besmear the faces of his attendants with blood, because we must make it appear that they are guilty of the king's murder.

[*Exit* Lady MACBETH. *Knocking off stage*].

Macbeth. From where is that knocking sound coming ? What is wrong with me that I am frightened at every sound ? How bloody appear these hands of mine ? Ha ! I cannot bear to look upon them ! Will the water of all oceans controlled by sea god Neptune suffice to wash my hands clean ? No, this blood on my hand will rather turn red the whole sea and its green waves.

Re-enter Lady MACBETH

Lady Macbeth. My hands have also become as red as yours now, but I am ashamed to feel as cowardly as you do. [*Knocking sound off stage*] Listen, I hear a knocking sound at the southern gate. Let us retire to our bedroom. Just a little water will wash away the stains of blood from the hands and will remove suspicion of this foul deed from our shoulders. Once it is removed everything will become quite easy. You appear to have lost your firmness and courage. [*Knocking within*] Listen ! there is more knocking at the gate. Put on your dressing gown at once because we may be required to go out and if we are not in night gowns, people would know that we have kept ourselves awake so long at odd hours. Collect yourself and do not give way to such cowardly thoughts.

Macbeth. It would be better to keep myself forgetful of my own self, than to realise the enormity of my crime. [*Knocking within*]

Wake Duncan with thy knocking ! I would thou couldst ! [*Exeunt*]

SCENE III

Enter a Porter. *Knocking within.*

Porter.[1] Here's knocking indeed ! If a man were porter of hell-gate, he should have old turn-in the key. [*Knocking within*] Knock, knock, knock ! Who's there, i' the name of *Beelzebub* ?[2] Here's a farmer that hanged himself on the expectation of plenty : come in time ; have *napkins*[3] *enow*[4] about you ; here you'll sweat for't. [*Knocking within.*] Knock, knock ! Who's there, in the other devil's name ? Faith, here's an *equivocator*[5] that could swear in both the scales against either scale ; who committed treason enough for God's sake, yet could not equivocate to heaven : O, come in equivocator [*Knocking within.*] Knock, knock, knock ! Who's there ? Faith, here's an English tailor come hither, for stealing out of a *French hose*[6] : come in, tailor ; here you may roast your goose [*Knocking within.*] Knock ; knock ; never at quiet ! What are you ? But this place is too cold for hell. *I'll devil-porter*[7] it no further. : I have thought to have let in some of all professions, that go the primrose way to the everlasting *bonfire*[8] [*Knocking within.*] Anon, anon ! I pary you, remember the porter.

[*Opens the gate.*]

1. Gate-keeper.
2. A Philistine god.
3. Handkerchief
4. Enough
5. Liar.
6. French
7. Act as porter of devil.
8. The fire of hell.

O' Duncan, wake up with the knocking sound if it is possible for you. I wish you were alive and could do that. [*Exeunt*]

SCENE III

Enter a Porter. *Knocking within.*

Porter. There seems to be some knocking at the gate in fact ! If a man were a porter of hell gate, he would be always called upon to open and shut the door. [*Knocking within*] This knocking will never stop I suppose. Who is knocking there, please tell me in the name of the Devil ? Here is a farmer who committed suicide by hanging himself in the hope of a plentiful harvest. O farmer, you have come at the right moment. I suppose you have quite enough handkerchiefs with you because here, in hell, you will have to wipe off sweat too often. [*Knocking within*] Now there is some other person knocking ! Who is there in the name of the other devil ? On faith here comes a liar who could swear on both sides of an issue, and committed many treasons in the name of religion, but could not make his way into heaven through telling lies. Come in quibbler [*Knock within*] Knock, Knock, Knock. Who is this fellow ? Indeed he is an English tailor who has come to this hell in order to steal a part of the cloth which should have gone to making of French trousers. Come in tailor, here in hell there is enough fire to heat your smoothing iron. [*Knocking wi'hin*] There is more knocking ! It is never quiet here. Who are you ? This place is so cold that it cannot be hell. I will not continue playing the keeper of hell gate any more. I wanted to admit men of all trades who held a life of ease and pleasure leading to the eternal fire of hell. Please do not be impatient, I am coming soon ! Please do not forget to pay the usual tip to the porter.

[*Opens the gate*]

Enter MACDUFF *and* LENNOX

Macduff. Was it so late, friend, ere you went to bed, that you do lie so late ?
Porter. Faith, sir, we were *carousing*[1] till the *second cock*[2].
Macduff. Is thy master *stirring*[3] ?
Our knocking has awaked him ; here he comes

Re-enter MACBETH

Lennox. Good morrow, noble sir.
Macbeth. Good morrow, both.
Macduff. Is the king stirring, worthy thane ?
Macbeth. Not yet.
Macduff. He did command me to call *timely*[4] on him :
I have almost slipp'd the hour.
Macbeth. I'll bring you to him
Macduff. I know this is a joyful trouble to you ;
But yet 'tis one.
Macbeth. The labour we delight in *physics*[5] pain.
This is the door.
Macduff. I'll make so bold to call,
For 'tis my *limited service*[6]. [*Exit.*
Lennox. Goes the king hence to-day ?
Macbeth. He does : he did *appoint*[7] so.
Lennox. The night has been *unruly*[8] : where we lay,
Our chimneys were blown down ; and, as they say
Lamentings heard i' th' air ; strange screams of death ;
And prophesying, with *accents*[9] terrible,
Of *dire combustion*[10] and confused events

1. Drinking.
2. Two or three a.m.
3. Awake
4. Early.
5. Cures.
6. Appointed duty.
7. Intended.
8. Disorderly.
9. Tones.
10. Terrible social disturbance

[*Enter* MACDUFF and LENNOX]

Macduff. Did you keep yourself up late last night, my friend, that you remained in bed till so late in the morning ?

Porter. Certainly sir, we were engaged in drinking bouts till the early hours of the morning.

Macduff. Is your master out of bed ? He seems to have been roused by our knocking. He is coming over here.

Enter MACBETH

Lennox. Goodmorning, noble sir.

Macbeth. Goodmorning to both of you.

Macduff. Is the king awake, noble lord ?

Macbeth. No, he is not yet awake.

Macduff. He had commanded me to wait on him early in the morning. I am afraid I have come later than the appointed hour.

Macbeth. I will conduct you to him.

Macduff. I know you feel joy to devote yourself to the service of the King but I fear it will be a trouble to you.

Macbeth. The labour which gives us delight cures our pain. Come on, this is the door to the king's chamber.

Macduff. I shall be bold to take liberty of calling upon the king, because it is my appointed duty.

Lennox. Does the king intend to go away from here to-day ?

Macbeth. He does, at least; that is his arrangement.

Lennox. The night has been rough and stormy. The chimneys of our bedrooms were blown down by the wind, and some people say lamenting sounds were heard in the air. They appeared as strange shrieks of persons dying a violent death. These screams seemed to prophesy with terrible sound, tumult and uproar.

New hatch'd to the *woful*[1] time : the *obscure bird*[2]
Clamour'd the livelong night : some say, the earth
Was *feverous*[3] and did shake.

Macbeth. 'Twas a *rough*[4] night.

Lennox. My young remembrance cannot parallel
A fellow to it.

Re-enter MACDUFF

Macduff. O horror, horror, horror ! Tongue nor heart
Cannot conceive nor name thee !

Macbeth, Lennox. What's the matter ?

Macduff. Confusion now hath made his masterpiece !
Most *sacrilegious*[5] murder hath broke ope
The Lord's *anointed temple,*[6] and stole thence
The life o' the building !

Macbeth What is't you say ? the life ?

Lennox. Mean you his majesty ?

Macduff. Approach the chamber, and destroy your sight
With a new *Gorgon*[7] : do not bid me speak ;
See, and then speak yourselves.

[*Exeunt Macb. and Len.*

Awake, awake !
Ring the *alarum-bell.*[8] Murder and treason !
Banquo and Donalbain ! Malcolm ! awake !
Shake off this *downy*[9] sleep, death's *counterfeit,*[10]
And look on death itself ! up, up, and see
The great doom's image ! Malcolm ! Banquo !
As from your graves rise up, and walk like sprites,

1. Sad.
2. Owl.
3. Feverish.
4. Stormy.
5. Impious.
6. Sacred body.
7. Horrible monsters
8. Bell to alert guards.
9. Comfortable, soft.
10. Image

of grim calamities to come. The owl which loves the darkness of night, hooted all through the dreadful night. According to some people there was such a terrible earthquake as if the earth was attacked with ague.

Macbeth. It was indeed a stormy night.

Lennox. In the memory of a young man like myself so boisterous a night has never passed.

Re-enter MACDUFF

Macduff. O, horror! I have seen a horrible sight—too horrible to be conceived and too terrible to be expressed in words.

Macbeth, Lennox. What is the matter?

Macduff. Destruction has done its worst. A most foul murder has been committed on the sacred person of the king, who is the Lord's anointed. The impious murderer has stolen his soul from the sacred temple of the king's body.

Macbeth. What are you saying? What do you mean by life?

Lennox. Do you mean His Majesty?

Macduff. Come to the king's sleeping chamber and make yourself blind by the horrible spectacle —the sight of a sacrilege which is as horrible as Gorgon. Do not ask me anything in detail. Come, see it yourself and then speak.

[*Exeunt Macbeth and Lennox*].

Awake, awake, everybody. Ring the alarm bell. There has been murder and treason! Banquo, Donalbain and Malcolm, wake up! Shake off the soft sleep which resembles death and look at actual death itself. Get up, and see a sight which is as horrible as the Day of Judgment. Malcolm, Banquo! Rise up from your sleep as from your graves and come away like ghosts to

To *countenance*[1] this horror! Ring the bell.
[*Alarum-bell rings.*

Re-enter Lady MACBETH

Lady Macbeth. What's the *business*[2],
That such a *hideous*[3] *trumpet*[4] calls to *parley*[5]
That sleepers of the house? speak, speak!

Macduff. O gentle lady,
'Tis not for you to hear what I can speak:
The repetition, in a woman's ear,
Would murder as it fell.

Enter BANQUO

O Banquo, Banquo,
Our royal master's murder'd!

Lady Macbeth. Woe, alas!
What, in our house?

Banquo. Too cruel any where.
Dear *Duff*[6], I *prithee*[7], contradict thyself,
And say it is not so.

Re-enter MACBETH *and* LENNOX

Macbeth. Had I but died an hour before this *chance*[8],
I had lived a blessed time; for, from this instant,
There's nothing *serious*[9] in *mortality*[10]:
All is but *toys*[11]: renown and grace is dead;
The wine of life is drawn, and the mere *lees*[12]
Is left this *vault*[13] to *brag*[14] of.

1. Look at
2. Matter.
3. Horrible.
4. Bell.
5. Conference
6. Macduff.
7. Pray you.
8. Event.
9. Important.
10. Life.
11. Trifles.
12. Dregs.
13. Cellar.
14. Boast

see this terrible spectacle. Ring the alarm-bell.

[*The alarm-bell rings*].

Re-enter Lady MACBETH

Lady Macbeth. What has happened that this ugly bell is being rung to rouse and call together persons sleeping in the castle ? Speak out what is the matter.

Macduff. O, noble lady, the news that I have to tell is not fit for your ears. The mere recital of it would be so horrible as to kill a woman.

Enter BANQUO

O Banquo, Banquo, our royal master, the king, has been murdered !

Lady Macbeth. O, distress, alas, ! Has the king been killed in our own house ?

Banquo. The murder of the king is an act of high cruelty irrespective of the place where it has been committed. Dear Macduff, please refute what you have just said and say that the king is not dead.

Re-enter MACBETH *and* LENNOX

Macbeth. If I had died only an hour before this mishap, I could be satisfied to have lived a happy life, for from this moment there is no attraction left for me in life. Everything appears to be mere trifle to me now. Honour and grace have perished for ever. All charm of life has passed away and what is left is hollow and worthless in this world vaulted by the sky.

Enter MALCOLM *and* DONALBAIN

Donalbain. What is *amiss* ?[1]

Macbeth. You are, and do not know't :
The spring, the head, the fountain of your blood
Is stopp'd ; the very source of it is stopp'd
Macduff. Your royal father's murderd.'
Malcolm. O, by whom ?
Lennox. Those of his chamber, as it seem'd had done't :
There hands and faces were all *badg'd*[2] with blood ;
So were their daggers, which *unwiped*[3] we found
Upon their pillows :
They stared, and were *distracted* ;[4] no man's life
Was to be trusted with them.
Macbeth. O, yet I do repent me of my fury,
That I did kill them.
Macduff. Wherefore did you so ?
Macbeth. Who can be wise, *amazed*,[5] *temperate*[6] and *furious*[7].
Loyal and neutral, in a moment ? No man :
The *expedition*[8] of my violent love
Outrun the pauser, reason. Here lay Duncan,
His *silver skin*[9] laced with his golden blood ;
And his *gash'd*[10] *stabs*[11] look'd like a breach in *nature*[12]
For ruin's wasteful entrance : there, the murderers,
Steep'd in the colours of their trade, their daggers
Unmannerly[13] *breech'd*[14] with *gore*[15] : who could refrain,
That had a heart to love, and in that heart
Courage to make's love known ?
Lady Macbeth. Help me hence, ho !
Macduff. Look to the Lady.

1. Wrong.
2. Marked.
3. Ud-cleaned.
4. Out of their senses.
5. Astonished.
6. Calm in feeling
7. Very angry.
8. Haste
9. Skin of light complexion.
10. Gaping.
11. Wounds
12. Natural lise.
13. Indecently.
14. Dressed.
15. Blood

Enter MALCOLM *and* DONALBAIN (Princes).

Donalbain. What is wrong here ?

Macbeth. You are wronged and you do not known it. The very fountain and source of your life is stopped.

Macduff. Your royal father, the king has been murdered.

Malcolm. O, by whom ?

Lennox. It appears that the grooms posted in the king's chamber have done it because their hands and faces are all marked with blood, and so are their daggers, which we found on their pillows, all stained with blood. They stared at us vacantly as if they were out of their senses. Their condition shows that they were incapable of being entrusted with the duties of guards.

Macbeth. Still, I am sorry to have killed them in a fit of fury.

Macduff. Why did you do so ?

Macbeth. At a moment when one is distracted by a fit of passion he cannot be expected to be thoughtful and self-restrained. No, it is not possible for a man to be considerate, distracted, moderate, furious, loyal and calm at one nad the same time. The urgency of my violent love for the king was too quick for the reason which would have delayed me in action. There lay on one side Duncan with his white body streaked with blood, and his gaping wounds looking like holes through which death entered to carry out its work of destruction. On the other side there lay his Murderers bathed in blood which they had spilt, their daggers all stained with red blood. No one, with a loving heart and courage to show his love, could possibly restrain himself from revenge.

Lady Macbeth. I am feeliug unwell—help me and take me away from this place. [*She faints*]

Macduff. Look after the lady.

when a … is astonish… calm, a… loyal + … a ma…

Smeared

clad

Malcolm. [*Aside to Don.*] Why do we hold our tongues,
That most may claim this *argument*[1] for ours ?
Donalbain. [*Aside to Malcolm.*] What should be spoken here, where our fate.
Hid in an *augor-hole*[2], may rush, and seize us ?
Let's away ;
Our tears not yet *brew'd*[3].
Malcolm. [*Aside to Don.*] Nor our strong sorrow
Upon the foot of motion.
Banquo. Look to the lady :
[*Lady Macbeth is carried out.*
And when we have our naked frailties hid,
That suffer in exposure, let us meet,
And *question*[4] this most *bloody piece of work*,[5]
To know it further. Fears and scruples shake us :
In the great hand of God I stand, and thence
Against the *undivulg'd*[6] pretence I fight.
Of treasonous *malice*.[7]
Macduff. And so do I.
All So all.
Macbeth. Let's *briefly*[8] put on manly readiness,
And meet i' the hall together.
All. Well contended.
[*Exeunt all except Malcolm and Donalbain.*
Malcolm. What will you do ? Let's not *consort*[9] with them :
To show an unfelt sorrow is an office.
Which the false man does easy. I'll to England
Donalbain. To Ireland I ; our separated fortune.
Shall keep us both the safer : where we are,

1. Subject
2. Dark and secret spot.
3. Ready.
4. Inquire into.
5. Murder.
6. Secret.
7. Wickedness.
8. Quickly
9. Associate.

Malcolm. [*Aside to Donalbain.*] Why are we dumbfounded when we are far more than others very vitally concerned in this matter ?

Donalbain. [*Aside to Malcolm.*] We should not say anything here in this house of murder because danger may spring upon us any moment from any unexpected quarters. Let us escape away from this place. It is not proper for us to shed tears at this great tragedy now when our own lives are in danger.

Malcolm. [*Aside to Donalbain.*] Nor, it is possible for us to give vent to our deep sorrow at this moment.

Banquo. Take care of the lady.

[*Lady Macbeth is carried away.*

Let us, after dressing ourselves properly to protect ourselves from cold, assemble together in order to investigate this cold-blooded murder and find out more facts connected with it. We are terribly shaken by fears and doubts. I commit myself to the care of God and taking my stand on it, I pledge myself to fight the secret plot hatched by wicked traitors.

Macduff. And I take pledge to do the same.

All. [*Jointly.*] So shall do all of us.

Macbeth. Let us be quick to put on our dress and assemble in the hall for further action.

All. [*Jointly*] *We agree to that.*

All, except Malcolm and Donalbain, depart.

Malcolm. What do you propose to do now ? In my opinion we should not join them. To display a pretended sorrow is a task of a hypocrite. I will now waste no time and will go to England.

Donalbain. I shall go to Ireland. Living apart we will be safer. Here men are hypocrites

There's daggers in men's smiles: the near in blood,
The nearer bloody.

Malcolm. This murderous *shaft*[1] that's shot
Hath not yet *lighted*,[2] and our safest way
Is to avoid the aim. Therefore, to horse;
And let us not be *dainty*[3] of leave-taking,
But *shift away*[4]: there's *warrant*[5] in that theft
Which steals itself, when there's no mercy left.
[*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV. *Outside* MACBETH'S *castle*

Enter Ross *and an* Old Man

Old Man. *Threescore and ten*[6] I can remember well:
Within the *volume*[7] of which time I have seen
Hours dreadful and things strange; but this *sore*[8] night
Hath *trifled*[9] former knowings.

Ross. Ah, good father,
Thou seest, the heavens as troubled with man's act,
Threaten his bloody stage: by the clock 'tis day,
And yet dark night *strangles*[10] the *travelling lamp*[11]:
Is't night's predominance, or the day's shame,
That darkness does the face of earth entomb,
When living light should kiss it?

Old Man. 'Tis unnatural,
Even like the deed that's done. On Tuesday last,
A falcon, *towering*[12] in her pride of place,
Was by a *mousing*[16] owl hawk'd at and kill'd.

Ross. And Duncan's horses—a thing most strange and certain—

1. Arrow.
2. Hit.
3. Delicate formalities.
4. Move away.
5. Justification for.
6. Seventy
7. Space, course.
8. Dreadful.
9. Made utterly insignificant.
10. Prevents from shining.
11. The sun.
12. Rising high.
13. Mouse-eater.

They greet us with smiles but are, at the same time, harbouring designs of murdering us. Even our closelv related kinsmen may likely be thirsty of our blood.

Malcolm. Our father has fallen victim to the arrow shot by the conspirators against the throne, but it has not yet hit the target. The safest course for us is to get away beyond its range. Let us, therefore, gallop away without wasting time in observing delicate formalities of bidding farewell to the company. We are justified in slipping away stealthily because we see that there is no mercy left here.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV. *Outside* MACBETH'S *castle*

Enter ROSS *and an* Old Man

Old Man. I can recall events of the last seventy years quite well. During this period I have witnessed many strange incidents and passed through terrible times but nothing that I may recall to my mind can be held to equal the frightfulness of the last horrible night.

Ross. Yes, good father, you see, how heaven appears to be annoyed at the wickedness of man and threatens the earth where bloody deeds have been done. By the clock it ought to be day but the darkness of night still chokes the light of the sun in his passage across the sky. Is it because of the triumph of night over the day or that the day is ashamed to show its face that thick darkness has wrapped the world at a moment when the bright sunbeams should kiss the earth.

Old Man. This phenomenon is as unnatural as the deed of the King's murder. Last Tuesday, an eagle, while soaring high in the air, was chased and killed by a mouse-hunting owl which attacked it like a hawk.

Ross. Another most unusual but authentic incident is reported about Duncan's horses which

Beauteous and swift, the *minions*[1] of their race,
Turn'd wild in nature, broke their stalls, flung out,
Contending 'gainst obedience, as they would make
War with mankind.

Old Man. 'Tis said they eat each other.

Ross. They did so, to the amazement of mine eyes,
That look'd upon't. Here comes the good Macduff.

Enter MACDUFF

How goes the world, sir, now ?

Macduff. Why, see you not ?

Ross. Is't known who did this more than bloody deed ?

Macduff. Those that Macbeth hath slain.

Ross. Alas, the day !
What good could they *pretend*[2] ?

Macduff. They were *suborn'd*[3] :
Malcolm and Donalbain, the king's two sons,
Are stol'n away and fled ; which puts upon them
Suspicion of the deed.

Ross. 'Gainst nature still :
Thriftless[4] ambition, that wilt *ravin up*[5]
Thine own life's means ! Then 'tis most like
The *sovereignty*[6] will *fall upon*[7] Macbeth.

Macduff. He is already named, and gone to Scone
To be invested.

Ross. Where is Duncan's body ?

Macduff. Carried to Colme-kill,
The sacred *store-house*[8] of his predecessors
And guardian of their bones.

1. The best.
2. Intend
3. Induced to it by bribe.
4. Foolish
5. Devouring.
6. Kingship.
7. Go to.
8. Graveyard, tomb.

are beautiful and swift and are the pick of their breed, turned wild and refusing to obey their grooms broke their stalls and rushed out as if they were up against mankind.

Old Man. It is generally reported that they tried to devour one another.

Ross. They tore one another before my own eyes and I was astonished to see this sight. Here comes noble Macduff.

Enter MACDUFF

How are things going on now, sir ?

Macduff. Can't you yourself see how they are going on ?

Ross. Has it been found out who was responsible for this bloody murder ?

Macduff. Those chamberlains whom Macbeth has slain.

Ross. Alas ! What could they gain by that ?

Macduff. They were bribed. Malcolm and Donalbain, the two sons of the King, have fled away from Inverness, and this arouses suspicion that they instigated the crime.

Ross. This is another example of unnatural[1] events. It is a foolish ambition that will devour its own substance. Then it is most probable that succession to the Scottish throne will fall upon the late King's cousin, Macbeth.

Macduff. He has already been nominated King and has gone to Scone to be crowned.

Ross. Where is Duncan's body ?

Macduff. It has been sent to Colme-kill where the bones of his ancestors are buried.

Ross. Will you to Scone ?

Macduff. No, cousin, I'll to Fife.

Ross. Well, I will thither.

Macduff. Well, may you see things well done there : *adieu*[1] !
Lest our old robes sit easier than our new !

Ross. Farewell, father.

Old Man. God's *benison*[2] go with you, and with those
That would make good of bad, and friends of foes !

[*Exeunt.*

ACT III

Scene 1 *Forres. The palace*

Enter Banquo

Banquo. Thou hast *it*[3] now : king, Cawdor, Glamis, all,
As the weird women promised, and, I fear,
Thou play'dst most foully for't : yet it was said
It should not *stand*[4] thy posterity,
But that myself should be the root and father
Of many kings. If there come truth from them—
As upon thee, Macbeth, their speeches shine—
Why, by the *verities*[5] on thee made good,
May they not be my *oracles*[6] as well,
And set me up in hope ? But hush ; no more

1. Forewell.
2. Blessings.
3. Crown.
4. Remain
5. Truths
6. Prophecies.

Ross. Will you go to Scone ?

Macduff. No, cousin, I will go home—to Fife.

Ross. Well, I have decided to go to Scone.

Macduff. Well, I hope you will see things done properly there. Good-bye ! If things do not go well there we will find things worse with us in future than they have been in the past.

Ross. [*To Old man*] Good-bye, father.

Old man. May God's blessings go with you, and all those who seek to change evil into good and enemies into friends.

[*Exennt*

ACT III

SCENE I. *Forres. The Palace*

Enter BANQUO

Banquo. You have won now all honours for which you aspired. So you have become King, thane of Cawdor and of Glamis, just as the weird women had promised. I am however, afraid that you had to act in a most treacherous way to materialise your ambitions. But it was prophesied that kingship would not pass to your descendants and that I would be the ancestor of the future dynasty of kings. If they could speak truth and their predictions have come true in your case, Macbeth, then judging by truths proved in your case, I may as well except that their forcasts will prove to be true in my case and this may set me up in hope. But I must hold my tongue and say no more in this respect.

Sennet [1]*sounded. Enter* MACBETH, *as king* ; Lady MACBETH, *as queen* ; LENNOX, ROSS, Lords, Ladies, *and* Attendants.

Macbeth. Here's our chief guest.

Lady Macbeth If he had been forgotten,
It had been as a gap in our great feast,
And *all-thing* unbecoming.

Macbeth. To-night we hold a solemn supper, sir,
And I'll request your presence.

Banquo. Let your highness
Command upon me ; to the which my duties
Are with a most *indissoluble*[3] tie
For ever knit.

Macbeth. Ride you this afternoon ?

Banquo. Ay, good lord.

Macbeth. We should have *else*[4] desired your good advice,
Which *still*[5] hath been both *grave*[6] and *prosperous*,[7]
In this day's council ; but we'll take to-morrow.
Is't far you ride ?

Banquo. As far my lord, as will fill up the time
'Twixt[8] this and supper : go not my horse the better,
I must become a borrower of the night
For a dark hour or *twain*[9].

Macbeth. Fail not our feast,

Banquo. My lord, I will not.

Macbeth. We hear, our *bloody*[10] cousins are bestow'd
In England and Ireland, not confessing
Their cruel *parricide*[11], filling their hearers
With strange *invention*[12] : but of that to-morrow,
When *therewithal*[13] we shall have *cause of state*[14]
Craying us jointly. *Hie*[15] you to horse : adieu,
Till you return at night. Goes Fleance with you ?

1. Set of notes played on trumpet.
2. Absolutely.
3. Unbreakable.
4. Otherwise.
5. Always.
6. Weighty.
7. Succesful.
8. Between.
9. Two.
10. Murderous.
11. Own father's murder.
12. False stories.
13. In addition to that.
14. State affairs.
15. Hasten.

Trumpets are played. Enter MACBETH, *as* King; Lady MACBETH, *as queen*; LENNOX, ROSS, Lords, ladies and attendants.

Macbeth. Here is our special guest of honour.

Lady Macbeth. If he had been forgotten, it would have been a glaring omission in our great feast and this omission would have been highly improper.

Macbeth. [*To Banquo*] We are holding a ceremonial banquet tonight, sir, and I request you to be present at it.

Banquo. Let your Majesty command me to come, because my services are bound to your commands by unbreakable ties.

Macbeth. Do you intend to go out for riding this afternoon ?

Banquo. Yes, my good lord.

Macbeth. If you had no riding programme in the afternoon, we would have sought your wise and prudent advice in today's council. Anyhow, it does not matter, for I will consult you tomorrow. Do you ride out far ?

Banquo. My lord, I will ride as far as would take up the time between now and supper. If my horse does not race along at a desirable speed, I will be reaching back an hour or two after sunset.

Macbeth. Anyhow, do not fail to attend our feast.

Banquo. No, my lord, I will not.

Macbeth. We are told that our bloody cousins have taken refuge, one in England and the other in Ireland, and that they have not confessed their guilt of murdering their father. They are, on the other hand, concocting strange lies : but we will talk of that tommorow, when in addition to that we will attend to other affairs of the state requiring our joint attention. Get you to your horse : farewell, till dinner time. Does your son Fleance go with you ?

Banquo. Ay, my good lord : our time does call upon's.

Macbeth. I wish your horses swift and sure of foot ;
And so I do commend you to their backs.
Farewell [*Exit Banquo.*
Let every man be master of his time,
Till seven at night ; to make society
The sweeter welcome, we will keep ourself
Till supper-time alone : *while*[1] then, *God be with you*[2] !
[*Exeunt all except Macbeth and an attendant.*
Sirrah[3], a word with you : attend those men
Our pleasure ?

Attendant. They are, my lord, *without*[4] the palace-gate.

Macbeth. Bring them before us.
[*Exit Attendant*
To be *thus*[5] is nothing ;
But to be safely thus.—Our fears in Banquo
Stick deep ; and in his royalty of nature
Reigns that which would be fear'd : 'tis much he dares :
And, to that *dauntless temper*[6] of his mind,
He hath a wisdom that doth guide his valour
To act in safety. There is none but he
Whose *being*[7] I do fear : and under him
My *Genius*[8] is rebuked ; as, it is said,
Mark Antony's was by Caesar. He chid the sisters,
When first they put the name of king upon me,
And *bade*[9] them speak to him ; then prophet-like
They hail'd him father to a *line*[10] of kings :
Upon my head they placed a fruitless crown,
And put a barren sceptre in my *gripe*[11],
Thence to be *wrench'd*[12] with an *unlineal*[13] hand,
No son of mine succeeding. If't be so,
For Banquo's *issue*[14] have I *filed*[15] my mind ;
For them the gracious Duncan have I murder'd ;

1. Till.
2. Good-bye.
3. Sir.
4. Outside.
5. King.
6. Fearless.
7. Existence.
8. Guarding spirit.
9. Ordered.
10. Family.
11. Group.
12. Taken away forcefully.
13. Not belonging to the dynasty.
14. Children.
15. Defiled

Banquo. Yes, my good lord. It is just the time we should start off.

Macbeth. I wish your horses to be swift and steady—and with these good wishes I bid you mount your steeds. Good-bye.

[*Exit Banquo*]

Let every man do what he pleases till seven at night. Wa shall be alone till supper time in order that we may better enjoy the company of guests at supper time. Till then good bye.

[*Exeunt all but Macbeth and an Attendant.*]

Follow, listen to me ; are those men waiting for us ?

Attendant. Your Majesty, they are waiting outside the palace gate.

Macbeth. Order them to appear before us.

[*Exit Attendant*]

Becoming a King is nothing unless one is free from dangers of being dethroned. We have, in our mind, deep-rooted fear of *Banquo* who has such a kingly nobility in his character which inspires fear. He is a brave man and with his irrepressible courage goes his wisdom which directs his heroism to bolder yet safer actions. There is none else except Banquo whom I fear on this earth, and in his presence my spirit trembles in fear, just as, it is said, Mark Antony trembled in the presence of Octavius Caesar. He rebuked the weird sisters when they first hailed me as King and commanded them to speak to him. They prophetically greeted him as an ancestor of a dynasty of Kings. Upon my head they placed only a barren crown, and in my hand they gave a barren rod of authority to be snatched away from me by one not belonging to my line. No heir of my body will succeed me. If kingship will pass to Banquo's descendants, then I have defiled my hands with blood for the sake of Banquo's children ; for them I have murdered the noble Duncan ; for them I have allowed

Put *rancours*[1] in the *vessel*[2] of my peace
Only for them, and mine *eternal jewel*[3]
Given to the *common enemy of man*[4]
To make them kings, the seed of Banquo kings!
Rather than so, come, fate, into the list,
And *champion me*[5] to the *utterance*[6]! Who's there?

Re-enter Attendant, *with two* Murderers.

Now go to the door, and stay there till we call.
[*Exit Attendant.*

Was it not yesterday we spoke together?

First murderer. It was, so please your highness.

Macbeth. Well then, now
Have you consider'd of my speeches? Know
That it was he in the times past which held you
So *under fortune*[7] *which*[8] you thought had been
Our innocent self; this I *made good*[9] to you
In our last conference, pass'd in *probation*[10] with you,
How you were *borne in hand*[11] how *cross'd*[12], the instruments.
Who wrought with them, and all things else that might
To *half a soul*[13] and to a *notion crazed*[14]
Say "Thus did Banquo."

First murderer. You made it known to us.

Macbeth. I did so, and went further, which is now
Our point of second meeting. Do you find
Your patience so *predominant*[15] in your nature,
That you can let this go? Are you so *gospell'd*[16]

1. Poison.
2. Cup.
3. Immortal soul.
4. The devil.
5. Challenge me.
6. Death,
7. Unfortunate.
8. Who.
9. Proved.
10. Act of proving.
11. Deceived.
12. Thwarted.
13. Half-witted person.
14. Crazy understanding.
15. Pre-eminent,
16. Influenced by Christ's Gospel,

bitterness to enter my heart and disturb my mental peace ; and for them I have given away my immortal soul to the Devil himself who is a sworn enemy of mankind. Instead of allowing the throne to slip away I would challenge fate to come forward and would fight it to the last moment of my life. Who is there ?

Re-enter Attendant *with two* Murderers

[*To Attendant.*] Now go out and keep waiting at the door till we summon you.

[*Exit Attendant*]

Was it not yesterday that we had a talk ogether ?

First Murderer. Yes, your Majesty, it was yesterday.

Macbeth. All right, then, have you carefully thought over what I spoke to you ? You must fully understand that it was Banquo who kept you pressed down in the past so that our innocent self was not responsible for all that, as you mistakably think. This was what I clearly impressed upon you in the course of our last conversation wherein I proved in detail as to how Banquo deluded you by false hopes and treacherous promises, what methods he adopted to dupe you and what agents he employed to carry out his plans. I also impressed upon you all the other facts which could easily exhibit even to a half-witted fellow and a crazed mind that it was none but Banquo who thwarted your future.

First Murderer. Yes, you made all these facts clear to us.

Macbeth. I did not merely tell you about the past but also hinted to you what I wished to do in future and this is the reason of our present interview. Do you possess such a conspicuous quality of patience in your character as to let the chance of revenge slip away ? Are you so deeply imbued with the spirit of Christianity

To pray for this good man and for his *issue*[1]
Whose heavy hand hath bow'd you to the grave,
And *beggar'd*[2] yours for ever ?

First Murderer. We are men, my liege.

Macbeth. Ay, in the *catalogue*[3] ye go for men;
As hounds and greyhounds, mongrels, spaniels. curs,
Shoughs[4], water-rugs, and demi-wolves are *clept*[5]
All by the name of dogs : the valued file
Distinguishes[6] the swift, the slow, the *subtle*[7]
The housekeeper, the hunter, every one
According to the gift which bounteous nature
Hath in him closed[8], whereby he does receive
Particular addition[9] from the bill
That writes them all alike : and so of men
Now, if you have a *station*[10] in the file,
Not i' the worst *rank*[11] of manhood, say't ;
And I will put that business in your bosoms,
Whose execution takes your enemy off,
Grapples you to the heart and love of us,
Who[12] wear our health but sickly in his life,
Which in his death were perfect.

Second Murderer. I am one, my liege,
Whom the *vile*[13] blows and *buffets*[14] of the world
Have so *incens'd*[15] that I am *reckless*[16] what
I do to *spite*[17] the word.

First Murderer. And I another
So weary with disasters, *tugg'd*[18] with fortune,
That I would set my life on any chance,
To mend it or be rid on't.

1. Children.
2. Made beggars.
3. General list.
4. Shaggy dogs.
5. Called.
6. Differentiates.
7. Clever.
8. Has given him.
9. Distinguishing title.
10. Position.
11. Grade.
12. I.
13. Evil.
14. Hard blows.
15. Angered.
16. Desperate.
17. Contempt.
18. Pulled to pieces.

as to pray for Banquo and his children—that Banquo whose tyranny has ruined your prospects in life and reduced your children to extreme poverty.

First Murderer. We have manly strength and courage, Your Majesty.

Macbeth. It is a fact that in the list of mankind, you are regarded as human-beings just as hunting dogs, greyhounds, a cross-breed dog, spaniels, curs, shoughs, shaggy water-dogs, and the cross-breeds between wolves and dogs are all called by the name of 'dog'. The list in which their gradation is made, distinguishes the swift, the slow, the cunning, the watch-dog, the hunting dog, according to the virtue with which nature has endowed them. So each dog receives a distinctive epithet marking it off in the list which gives to all of them the common name of dog. This is also true of man. Now if you wish to have a definite position among the various groups and classes of human beings, and refuse to be included among the lowest class of men, then speak out to me and I will entrust to you an undertaking, which when carried out will not only do away with your enemy but will also bind you to our sincerest love because so long as Banquo is alive, I cannot enjoy my life and shall be quite happy if he is dead.

Second Murderer. Your Majesty, I am a man who has sustained such hard knocks of adversity through rough treatment at the hands of mankind, that I am ready to do anything in order to have my revenge.

First Murderer. And I am another man who has been pulled down and harassed by fortune to such an extent that I am quite prepared to risk my life in any understanding either to improve the prospect of my life or to put an end to it altogether.

Macbeth inciting & provoking murderers

Macbeth makes arrangement for murder of Banquo by the help of two pers[ons]

Macbeth. Both of you
Know Banquo was your enemy.

Both Murderers. True, my lord

Macbeth. So is he mine, and in such bloody distance
That every minute of his being thrusts
Against my near'st of life : and though I could
With *barefaced*[1] power sweep him from my sight,
And bid my will *avouch*[2] it, yet I must not,
For[3] certain friends that are both his and mine,
Whose loves I may not drop, but *wail*[4] his fall
Who I myself struck down : and thence it is
That I to your assistance do make love,
Masking the business from the common eye
For sundry weighty reasons.

Second Murderer. We shall, my lord,
Perform what you command us.

First Murderer. Though our lives—

Macbeth. Your *spirits*[5] shine through you. Within this hour at most,
I will *advise*[6] you where to *plant*[7] yourselves,
Acquaint you with the perfect *spy*[8] o' the time,
The moment on't ; for't must be done to-night,
And something from the palace , always thought
That I require a clearness : and with him—
To leave no *rubs*[9] nor *botches*[10] in the work—
Fleance his son, that keeps him company,
Whose absence is no less *material*[11] to me
Than is his father's, must embrace the fate
Of that dark hour. Resolve yourselves *apart* :[12]

1. Undisguised.
2. Validate.
3. On account of.
4. Lament
5. Courage.
6. Instruct.
7. Put.
8. Knowlege.
9. Imperfections.
10. Clumsy patches.
11. Important.
12. separately.

Macbeth. So both of you are convinced that Banquo is your enemy.

Both Murderers. Yes, Your Majesty, it is quite correct.

Macbeth. Similarly Banquo is my enemy, and is placed as close to me as to give rise to thoughts of murder. We are so bitterly hostile to each other that every minute of his life is like a stab in my heart. Although I can get him killed by the exercise of my royal authority, and can also offer a justification of my action by maintaining that I desired it as a king, yet I must not do so because some of my friends are also his friends and I cannot afford to do a thing whereby I may lose their love. Besides that I must mourn his death for the sake of appearance, though I would have got him murdered myself. It is for this reason that I seek your help, because I wish to conceal my plans from the public on account of various important reasons.

Second Murderer. Your majesty, we shall do what you command us to do.

First Murderer. Even at the cost of our lives.

Macbeth. You have proved now that you are men of courage. Within an hour at the latest, I will direct you as to where you should lie in ambush, and will let you know the exact time, and even of the moment when you should perform the deed, because the task must be done to-night at some distance from my palace. I must be kept free from suspicion in order that no imperfections or flaws may be left in our plan. I wish that his son Fleance who will be accompanying him and whose removal is as essenial as that of his father, must also die along with his father in the dark hour. Now go and make up your minds after consultation among yourselves.

I'll come to you *anon.*[1]

Both Murderers. We are *resolved*,[2] my lord

Macbeth. I'll *call*[3] upon you *straight*[4] : *abide*[5] within.

[*Exeunt Murderers.*

It is concluded : Banquo, thy soul's flight,
If it find heaven, must find it out to-night.

[*Exit.*

SCENE II. *The palace*

Enter Lady MACBETH *and* a Servant

Lady Macbeth. Is Banquo gone from court ?

Servant. *Ay*,[6] madam, but returns again to-night.

Lady Macbeth. Say to the king, I would attend his leisure.
For a few words.

Servant. Madam, I will. [*Exit*

Lady Macbeth. Naught's had, all's spent,
Where our desire is got without *content* :[7]
'Tis safer to be that which we destroy,
Than by destruction *dwell in*[8] doubtful joy.

Enter MACBETH

How now,[9] my lord ! why do you keep alone,
Of *sorriest*[10] *fancies*[11] your companions making ;
Using those thoughts which should indeed have died
With them they think on ? Things without all remedy
Should be *without regard* :[12] what's done is done.

Macbeth. We have *scotch'd*[13] the snake, not kill'd it :
She'll close and be herself, whilst our *poor malice*[14]
Remains in danger of her former tooth.

1. Immediately.
2. Determined.
3. Summon.
4. Immediately.
5. Stay.
6. Yes.
7. Contentment.
8. Remain in.
9. What is the matter
10. Saddest
11. Thoughts.
12. Unnoticed.
13. Slightly wounded.
14. Weak ill-will.

I will come to you shortly.

Both Murderers. We have already made up our minds Your Majesty.

Macbeth. I will presently summon you. Wait inside. [*Exeunt Murderers.*

The matter is settled. Banquo, if you are destined to go to heaven your soul will be dispatched there to-night, [*Exit.*

Scene II. *The palace*

Enter Lady Macbeth *and a* Servant

Lady Macbeth. Has Banquo left the palace ?

Servant. Yes, Madam but he will come back again to-night.

Lady Macbeth. Tell the king that I am awaiting his leisure to have a talk with him.

Servant. Madam, I will do so.

Lady Macbeth. We have gained nothing what we aimed at and while gaining our desire we have lost everything without at the same time winning contentment. It is better to be dead than to live in a state of doubtful joy.

Enter Macbeth

What is the matter, my lord, that you keep yourself aloof indulging in gloomy thoughts ? Why do you brood on those thoughts which should have been banished from your mind with the death of Duncan ? Things which cannot be cured should not be cared for. That which is done cannot be undone.

Macbeth. We have only inflicted a wound on the snake, and have not killed it yet. The wound will heal up and the snake will be as dangerous as before. Our futile attempt to harm the snake shall expose us to the danger of its poisonous tooth.

But let the frame of things *disjoint*[1], both the worlds *suffer*,[2]
Ere[3] we will eat our meal in fear, and sleep
In the *affliction*[4] of these terrible dreams
That shake us *nightly*[5]: better be with the dead,
Whom we, to gain our peace, have sent to peace,
Than on the torture of the mind to lie
In *restless ecstasy*.[6] Duncan is in his grave;
After life's *fitful fever*[7] he sleeps well;
Treason has done his worst: nor steel, nor poison
Malice domestic,[8] *foreign levy*,[9] nothing,
Can touch him further.

Lady Macbeth. Come on;
Gentle my lord, *sleek*[10] o'er your *rugged*[11] looks;
Be bright and *jovial*[12] among your guests to-night

Macbeth. So shall I, love; and so, I pray, be you:
Let your remembrance apply to Banquo;
Present him eminence, both with eye and tongue:
Unsafe the while that we
Must *lave*[13] our honours in these flattering streams,
And make our faces *vizards*[14] to our hearts,
Disguising what they are.

Lady Macbeth. You must leave this

Macbeth. O, full of scorpions is my mind, dear wife!
Thou know'st that Banquo and his Fleance live.

Lady Macbeth. But in them nature's copy's not *eterne*.[15]

Macbeth. There's comfort yet; they are *assailable*;[16]
Then be thou *jocund*:[17] ere the bat hath flown

1. May fall to pieces.
2. Perish.
3. Before.
4. Suffering.
5. Every night.
6. Violent agony.
7. Feverish agitation.
8. Civil War.
9. Forces from abroad.
10. Smooth
11. Disturbed.
12. Happy.
13. Secure.
14. Masks.
15. Eternal.
16. Mortal.
17. Merry.

But let the order of the world shatter, heaven and earth perish rather than that we shall agree to live in such constant fear as to eat our meals in fear and to sleep under frightful dreams which afflict us every night. It is better to be dead which those whom we have dispatched to 'peace' of grave in the vain hope of gaining peace for ourselves, than live in continuous mental agony. Duncan is dead and sleeps peacefully in his grave. The worries of life do no more trouble him. His disloyal subjects have done worst to him. Neither sword nor poison, neither treachery at home nor foreign invasion can touch and harm him now.

Lady Macbeth. Collect yourself, my gentle lord smooth down your perturbed looks. Look bright and jovial among your guests tonight at the banquet.

Macbeth. My dearest wife, I shall do so and request you also to do the same. Pay special attention to Banquo and treat him as a guest of honour both by your looks and words. Our position is still unsecure and we are forced to keep up our royal dignity by flattering the vanity of influential persons like Banquo. We have to wear masks on our faces so as to conceal our real feelings.

Lady Macbeth. Yo must not think in that way.

Macbeth. O my dear wife, my mind is tormented by poisonous thoughts, for, you know that Banquo and his son Fleance are still alive.

Lady Macbeth. But they are not immortal.

Macbeth. There is some consolation in what you suggest. They are no doubt mortal. So be merry, before the bat has flown round the cloisters

His *cloister'd*[1] flight, ere to black *Hecate's*[2] summons
The shard-borne beetle with his drowsy hums
Hath rung night's yawning peal, there shall be done
A dead of dreadful note.

Lady Macbeth. What's to be done?

Macb. Be innocent of the knowledge, dearest chuck,
Till thou applaud the deed. Come, *seeling*[3] night,
Scarf up[4] the tender eye of pitiful day;
And with thy bloody and invisible hand
Cancel and tear to pieces that great bond
Which keeps me pale! Light thickens, and the crow
Make wing to the *rooky*[5] wood:
Good things of day begin to drop and drowse,
Whiles night's black agents to their preys do *rouse*[6]
Thou marvell't at my words: but hold thee still;
Thiugs bad began make strong themselves by ill:
So, prithee, go with me. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III. *A park near the palace.*

Enter three Murderers.

First Murderer. But who did *bid thee*[7] join with us?

Third Murderer. Macbeth.

Second Murderer. He needs not our mistrust; since he *delivers*[8]
Our offices[9], and what we have to do,
To the direction just.

1.
2. Queen of magic, witches, ghosts and spirits
3. Blinding.
4. Close the eyes.
5. Full of crows.
6. Rise.
7. Order you.
8. Tells.
9. Our duties.

of the castle, before the beetle, with its horny wings, has begun its drowsy humming to summon people to slumber at the call of Hecate, a deed of frightful nature be done.

Lady Macbeth. What sort of deed is going to be done ?

Macbeth. My dearest wife, you need not worry about it till the deed is done to provoke your admiration. Come, O blinding night, and close the sensitive eye of the day that may melt people into pity. Come and with your murderous unseen hand render invalid and tear down the bond of Banquo's life that keeps me in a state of constant fear. It is growing dark, and the crow is flying back to its wood. The good creatures of the day are feeling tired and wish to sleep while the wicked spirits of night are active to hunt their prey. You are amazed at my words, but be patient, for things that are begun with a crime must be strengthened by further crimes. So I request you to come along with me.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE III. *A park near the palace*

Enter three Murderers.

First Murderer. But who commanded you to join us?

Third Murderer. Macbeth.

Second Murderer. There is no reason for suspecting him, because he instructs us to do the work exactly in accordance with the directions given by Macbeth.

First Murderer. Then stand with us.
The west yet glimmers with some streaks of day :
Now spurs the *lated*[1] traveller *apace*[2]
To *gain*[3] the *timely inn*[4] ; and near approaches
The *suubject of our watch*[5].

Third Murderer. Hark ! I hear horses.

Ban. [*Within*] Give us a light there, ho !

Second Murderer. Then 'tis he : the rest
That are within the note of expectation
Already and i' the court.

First Murderer. His horses go *about*[6].

Third Murderer. Almost a mile : but he does usually,
So all men do, from hence to the palace-gate
Make it their walk.

Second Murderer. *A light*[7], a light !

First Murderer. 'Tis he,

First Murderer. *Stand to't*[8].

Enter BANQUO *and* FLEANCE *with a torch.*

Banquo. It will be rain to-night.

First Murderer. Let it come down.
[*They assault Banquo.*

Banquo. O, treachery ! Fly, good Fleance, fly, fly, fly !
Thou *Mayst*[9] revenge. O slave ! [*Dies. Fleance escapes.*

Third Murderer. Who did strike out the light ?

First Murderer. Was't not the way ?

Third Murderer. There's *but*[10] one *down*[11] ; the son is fled.

Second Murderer. We have lost
Best half of our *affair*[12].

First Murderer. Well, let's away, and say how much is done. [*Exeunt.*

1. Belated
2. Quickly.
3. Reach.
4. Welcome rest house.
5. Banquo
6. By a longer route.
7. I see a light.
8. Remain firm.
9.
10. Only.
11. Killed
12. Business.

First Murderer. Then you remain with us. There are some dim gleams of light in the western horizon. The time has now come when the belated travellers hasten speedily to reach the inn in time, and the man for whom we are waiting here must be approaching.

Banquo

Third Murderer. Listen, I hear the sound of trampling of horses.

Banquo. [*From off the stage.*] Ho ! give me a light there.

Second Murderer. Then it is Banquo. The other guests who are expected to attend the supper have already arrived in the palace courtyard.

First Murderer. His horses are taking up a longer route.

Third Murderer. Yes, by the longer route, it is almost a mile from here to the palace. But like others, Banquo usually walks from here to the palace gate.

Second Murderer. There I see a light.

Third Murderer. It is Banquo.

First Murderer. Stand fast and be ready.

Enter BANQUO *and* FLEANCE *with a torch*

Banquo. It will rain tonight.

First Murderer. Let blows rain on his head.

[*They attack Banquo.*

Banquo. O, this is treachery ! Good Fleance, my son, fly away for your life. You may yet take revenge of my death. O, you villian !

[*Dies. Fleance escapes.*

Third Murderer. Who put out the light ?

First Murderer. Was it not proper ?

Third Murderer. Only one has been killed. The son has escaped.

Second Murderer. We have failed to discharge more important duty entrusted to us.

First Murderer. Well, let us go and report to the king how we have killed Banquo.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV. *The same. Hall in the palace*

A banquet prepared. Enter MACBETH, Lady MACBETH, ROSS, LENNOX, Lords, *and* Attendants.

Macbeth. You know your own *degrees*[1], sit down : at first
And last the hearty welcome.
Lords. Thanks to your majesty.
Macbeth. Ourself will *mingle*[2] with *society*[3]
And play the humble host.
Our hostess keeps her *state*[4] but *in best time*[5]
We will require her welcome.
Lady Macb. *Pronounce it*[6] for me, sir, to all our friends :
For my heart speaks they are welcome.
Macb. See, they *encounter thee*[7] with their hearts' thanks.
Both sides are even : here I'll sit i' the *midst* :[8]

Enter first Murderer *to the door.*

Be *large in mirth* ; [9] anon we'll drink a measure
The table round. [*Approaching the door.*] There's blood upon thy face.
Murderer. 'Tis Banquo's then.
Macbeth. 'Tis better thee without than he within.
Is he *dispatch'd* ?[10]
Murderer. My lord, his throat is cut ; that I did for him.
Macb. Thou art the best o' the *cut-throats* : [11] yet he's good
That did the like for Fleance : if thou didst it,
Thou art the *nonpareil*[12]
Murderer. Most royal sir,
Fleance is scared.
Macb. Then comes my fit again : I had else been perfect ;
Whole[13] as the marble, *founded*[14] as the rock,

1. Ranks.
2. Mix
3. Guests.
4. Chair of state.
5. At proper time.
6. Express my well-come.
7. Reply to you
8. Middle.
9. Thoroughly merry.
10. Murdered.
11. Murderers.
12. Incomparable.
13. Flawless
14. Firm.

SCENE IV. *The same. Hall in the palace*
A banquet prepared. Enter MACBETH, Lady MACBETH, ROSS, LENNOX, Lords, *and* Attendants.

Macbeth. You know your respective places. Take your seats accordingly. Once for all I accord to you a warm welcome.

Lords. We thank Your Majesty.

Macbeth. I will sit freely with my guests assembled here and would like to humbly attend to you as a host. Our hostess, my wife, will remain seated on her chair of state but at an appropriate moment we will request her to come to the table and welcome her guests in person.

Lady Macbeth. [*To Macbeth*]. Sir, bid welcome to all your friends on my behalf. I welcome them cordially.

Macbeth. [*To the Lady*]. Just see for yourself that the guests are repaying your cordial word of welcome with warm thanks to you. Both sides of the table are occupied with guests in equal number. I shall sit in the middle.

Enter first Murderer *to the door.*

Enjoy yourself freely. Presently we will join you and drink the health of every one seated round the table. [*Approaching the door.*] There are marks of blood on your face.

Murderer. It is the blood of Banquo then.

Macbeth. It is better that this blood is sticking on your face than it should be in Banquo's body. Have you murdered him?

Murderer. Your Majesty, I did myself cut his throat.

Macbeth. Then you are the best cut-throat I have ever seen. Still the man who killed Fleance is also praiseworthy. If you have done that task also then you are a unique person.

Murderer. Your Majesty, I am sorry that Fleance has fled away.

Macbeth. Then, in that case, my fears come back again. If Fleance had been killed, I would feel safe, solid like marble, firm like rock, and as

As *broad and general*[1] as the *casing*[2] air,
But now I am *cabin'd*,[3] cribb'd, confined, bound in
To *saucy*[4] doubts and fears. But Banquo's safe?

Murderer. Ay, my good lord; safe in a ditch he *bides*,[5]
With twenty *trenched*[6] *gashes*[7] on his head;
The least a death to nature.

Macbeth. Thanks for that:
There the grown serpent lies; the worm that's fled
Hath nature that in time will venom breed,
No teeth for the present. *Get thee gone*:[8] to-morrow
We'll hear, ourselves, again. [*Exit Murderer.*

Lady Macbeth. My royal lord,
You do not give the cheer: the feast is sold
That is not often *vouch'd*[9] while 'tis a-making,
'Tis given with welcome: to feed were best at home;
From thence[10] the *sauce*[11] to meat is ceremony;
Meeting were bare without it.

Macbeth. Sweet remembrancer!
Now, good digestion wait on appetite,
And health on both!

Lennox. May't please Your Highness sit.
[*The Ghost of Banquo enters, and sits in Macbeth's place.*

Macb. Here had we now our *country's honour*[12] *roof'd*[13]
Were the *graced*[14] person of our Banquo present;
Who may I rather challenge for unkindness
Than pity for *mischance*![15]

Ross. His absence, sir,
Lays blame upon his promise. Please't your highness
To *grace us*[16] with your royal company.

Macbeth. The table's full.

Lennox. Here is a place reserv'd, sir.

1. Free and unrestrained
2. Surrounding.
3. Enclosed in a cabin.
4. Annoying.
5. Lies.
6. Deep-cut.
7. Wounds
8. Go away
9. Assured
10. Away from home
11. A dressing poured over food for relish.
12. Nobility of the country.
13. Under a roof.
14. Gracious.
15. Accident.
16. Favour us

free as the air which envelopes the earth. But now that Fleance is alive, I feel as if I am enclosed in a cell, shut up in a crib, cramped within narrow bounds, shackled, and overtaken by annoying doubts and fears. But is Banquo really dead to make me feel safe ?

Murderer. Yes, Your Majesty, he lies lifeless in a ditch with twenty deep wounds on his head, the smallest of which is enough to cause death in the natural course.

Macbeth. I thank you for that. That means that the grown serpent is dead. The young snake which has fled is harmless at present but might grow poisonous teeth later. You may go now. We shall talk it over again tomorrow.

[*Exit Murderer.*

Lady Macbeth. My lord, you do not extend proper hospitality to the guests attending the banquet. A feast in which the host is not present to welcome the guests is no better than a sold one. When hospitable cheers are absent, one can do it at home in a best way. Formal courtesy which is shown to guests gives relish to the feast. Without it a dining in company would be very dull.

Macbeth. My sweet wife, you have done well to remind me of that. May you have a good appetite, strong digestive power and good health.

Lennox. Please, Your Majesty, take your seat

[*The Ghost of Banquo enters and sits down in Macbeth's place*].

Macbeth. If the virtuous Banquo were present here in this assembly, we should have this moment all our distinguished countrymen gathered under this roof. I wish I may rebuek him with unkindness than show pity for any mishap to him.

Ross. Sir, Banquo's absence shows that he does not care to keep his promise. Will Your Majesty be pleased to honour us by taking your seat at the table with us ?

Macbeth. But I see that all chairs are occupied.

Lennox. Sir, here is a seat reserved for you.

Macbeth. Where ?

Lennox. Here, my good lord. What is't that *moves*[1] your highness ?

Macbeth. Which of you have done this ?

Lords. What, my good lord ?

Macbeth. Thou cans say I did it : never shake
The gray *locks*[2] at me.

Ross. Gentlemen, *rise*[3] ; his highness is not well.

Lady Macbeth. Sit, worthy friends : my lord is often thus,
And hath been from his youth : pray you, keep seat ;
The fit is *momentary* ; [4] upon a thought
He will again be well : if much you *note*[5] him,
You shall offend him, and *extend*[6] his *passion* : [7]
Feed, and regard him not. Are you a man ?

Macbeth. Ay, and a bold one, that dare look on that
Which might *appal*[8] the devil.

Lady Macbeth. *O proper stuff* ! [9]
This is the very painting of your fear :
This is the *air-drawn*[10] dagger which, you said,
Led you to Duncan. O, these *flaws*[11] and starts,
Impostors to true fear, would *well-become*[12]
A women's story at a winter's fire,
Authorized by her grandam. Shame itself !
Why do you make such faces ? When all's done,
You look but on a stool.

Macbeth. Prithee, see there ! behold ! look ! lo ! how say you ?
Why, what care I ? If thou canst nod, speak too
If *charnel-houses*[13] and our graves must send

1. Effects.
2. Blood-stained hair.
3. Quit the table.
4. Temporary
5. Notice.
6. Increase.
7. Excitement.
8. Frightten.
9. Utter nonsense.
10. Painted on the air.
11. Outbursts.
12. Suit very well.
13. Tombs.

Mabceth. Where is that seat ?

Lennox. Here it is, my noble lord. What is it that agitates Your Majesty ?

Macbeth. Which of you have done this ?

Lords. What, my good lord ?

Macbeth. [*Addressing the Ghost.*] You cannot say I did it. Do not shake your bloody hair at me.

Ross. Gentlemen, let us rise, for His Majesty is unwell.

Lady Macbeth. Keep your seats, good friends. My husband is often distracted thus. He has been subject to fits of absent-mindeadness like this ever since his youth. Please keep sitting. This fit will soon pass off. He will be well in a moment. If you pay attention to what he says, you will irritate him and increase his excitement. Please continue your meals and take no notice of him.

[*Aside to Macbeth.*] Can you be called a man ?

Macbeth. Yes, and also bold because I dare to look upon a horrible thing which might frighten the very devil.

Lady Macbeth. That is utterly nonsensical talk. It is a product of your frightened fancy, and is just like the phantom dagger which, you said, led you to Duncan's chamber. O, these sudden outbursts of passion are nothing but illusory images pretending to be genuine fear. They might be appropriate to a fireside talk told on a winter evening by a woman, who had heard it from her own grandmother. It is extremely disgraceful ! Why do you display such fear on your face, when, after all, you are looking only at a stool.

Macbeth. I request you to look there. First see and then prononce your judgment. [*To the Ghost*] Why, what do I care for you ? If you can nod your head, then you ought to have power to speak also. If buried

Those that we bury back, our *monuments*[1]
Shall be the *maws*[2] of kites. [*Ghost disappears.*

Lady Macbeth. What, quite *unmann'd*[3] in folly ?

Macbeth. If I stand here, I saw him.

Lady Macbeth. *Fie*[4] for shame ?

Macbeth. Blood hath been shed ere now, i' the olden time,
Ere *humane*[5] *statute*[6] *purged*[6] the gentle *weal*[8] :
Ay, and since to, murders have been perform'd
Too terrible for the ear : the time has been,
That, when the brains were out, the man would die,
And there an end, but now they rise again,
With *twenty mortal murders*[9] on their *crowns*,[10]
And push us from our stools : this is more strange
Than such a murder is.

Lady Macbeth. My worthy lord,
Your noble friends do *lack*[11] you.

Macbeth. I do forget :
Do not *muse*[12] at me, my most worthy friends ;
I have strange *infirmity*[13] which is nothing
To those that know me. Come, love and health to all ;
Then I'll sit down. Give me some wine, fill full.
I drink to the general joy o' the whole table,
And to our dear friend Banquo, whom we miss ;
Would he were here ! to all, and him, we thirst,
And all to all.

Lords. Our duties, and the pledge.

1. Graves.
2. Stomachs.
3. Who has losi manly courage.
4. An expression of contempt.
5. Civilized.
6. Laws.
7. Purified.
8. State.
9. Twenty fatal wounds.
10. Heads.
11. Miss.
12. Be surprised.
13. Disease

corpses can come out of graves, then our graves should be the stomachs of the birds of prey.

[*Ghost disappears.*

Ghost of B disappears

Lady Macbeth. What, are you wholly deprived of manly courage by your foolish fear ?

Macbeth. It is as true as I stand here that I saw him.

Lady Macbeth. Shame upon you for such a behaviour !

Macbeth. Murders had been committed in the past, before civilized laws were framed to purify the peaceful society. Yes, but even after that murders too shocking for the ear have been committed. There was a time when if the brains of men were dashed out, they would die and be finished for ever. But now the murdered men revive again even after receiving twenty fatal wounds on their heads and displace us from our seats. This phenomenen is stranger than the murder itself.

Lady Macbeth. My worthy lord, your noble friends miss your company at table.

Macbeth. I do often forget myself. Do not marvel at me, my worthy friends. I have a strange disease, which does not worry those who know me. Come, let me drink for love and health to all of you and then I will take my seat. Give me some wine, fill your glasses to the brim. I now drink to the happiness of all seated at this table and specially of our friend Banquo, whom we miss at this banquet. I wish he were here ! Let us drink the heath of all and of Banquo. I express my best wishes to all of you.

wonder

Lords. We offer you our services and pledge of loyalty.

Re-enter Ghost

Macbeth. *Avaunt*[1] ! and *quit*[2] my sight ! let the earth hide thee !
Thy bones are *marrowless*,[3] thy blood is cold ;
Thou hast no *speculation*[4] in those eyes
Which thou dost *glare*[5] with !

Lady Macbeth. Think of this, good peers,
But as a thing of custom : 'tis no other ;
Only it spoils the pleasure of the time.

Macbeth. What man dare, I dare :
Approach thou like the rugged Russian bear,
The arm'd rhinoceros, or the Hyrcan tiger ;
Take any shape but that, and my firm nerves
Shall never tremble : or be alive again,
And *dare me*[6] to the desert with thy sword ;
If trembling I *inhabit*[7] then, *protest*[8] me
The baby of a girl. *Hence*[9] horrible shadow !
Unreal mockery,[10] hence ! [*Ghost disappears.*
Why, so ; *being gone*,[11]
I am a man again. Pray you, sit still.

Lady Macbeth. You have *displaced*[12] the *mirth*,[13] broke the good meeting.
With most *admired*[14] disorder.

Macbeth. Can such things be,
And *overcome*[15] us like a summer's cloud,
Without our special wonder ? You make me strange
Even to the *disposition*[16] that I *owe*,[17]
When now I think you can *behold*[18] such sights,
And keep the natural *ruby*[19] of your cheeks,

1. Begone
2. Leave.
3. Dead.
4. Sight.
5. Stare.
6. Challenge me.
7. Remain
8. Declare
9. Go away.
10. Unreal; counterfeit.
11. Now that you have gone.
12. Thrown into confusion.
13. Joy.
14. Astonishing.
15. Overshadow.
16. Character.
17. Own.
18. See.
19. Red colour.

Re-enter Ghost

Macbeth. Begone ! Get out of my sight. Let the earth conceal you under its surface. Your bones have no marrow and your blood is cold. The eyes with which you stare at me are without sight.

Lady Macbeth. Noble lords, take this behaviour of my husband as something habitual. It is no more than that. My only regret is that it spoils the mirth of tonight's gathering.

Macbeth. I am as brave as to do all that a man can have courage to do. [*Addressing the Ghost.*] Draw near me in the shape of a Russian bear or rhinoceros armed with tusks or the tiger of Hyrcania, assume any form except that of the dead Banquo, and my strong nerves shall never tremble with fear. Or be alive again and challenge me to have a sword fight in a duel with you at some lonely spot. If at that moment I show fear then call me the sickly child of an immature mother. Go away, you the false shadow of man. [*Ghost disappears*] So now it has vanished and I am once again in my normal condition. [*To lords*]. I request you to keep yourselves in your seats.

Lady Macbeth. You have spoilt the joy and broken up the happy gathering by creating strange confusion and disorder.

Macbeth. Is it possible that such things may happen and pass unnoticed like a summer cloud which covers the sky without rousing any surprise ? You make me doubt my courage by your cool behaviour in the presence of a ghost whose vision you may see without losing the natural bloom on

When mine is *blanch'd*[1] with fear.

Ross. What sights, my lord ?

Lady Macbeth. I pray you, speak not ; he grows worse and worse ;
Question enrages him : at once, good night :
Stand not upon the order of your going,
But go at once.

Lennox. Good night ; and better health
Attend His Majesty !

Lady Macbeth. A kind good night to all !

[*Exeunt. all except Macbeth and Lady Macbeth.*

Mac. It will have blood ; they say blood will have blood :
Stones have been known to move and trees to speak :
Augures[2] and understood relations have
By *magot-pies*[3] and *choughs*[4] and *rooks*[5] brought forth
The secret'st *man of blood*[6]. What is the night ?

Lady Macbeth. Almost at odds with morning, which is which.

Mac. How say'st thou, that Macduff denies his person
At our great bidding ?

Lady Macbeth. Did you send to him, sir ?

Macbeth. I hear it by the way ; but I will send :
There's not a one of them but in his house
I keep a servant *fee'd*.[7] I will to-morrow
And *betimes*[8] I will—to the weird sisters :
More shall they speak ; for now I am *bent*[9] to know,
By the worst means, the worst. For mine own good,

1. Turned pale.
2. Omens.
3. Magpies
4. Jack-daws.
5. Crows.
6. Murderer.
7. In my pay.
8. Early.
9. Determined.

your cheeks while my own cheeks have turned white with fear.

Ross. What vision are you talking about, my lord ?

Lady Macbeth. I request you not to speak to him. His fit is growing worse and your questions will excite him more. Let me bid good night to you all at once. Please leave at once without losing time in observing courtly etiquette of retiring in order of rank.

to observe etiquette

Lennox. Good night. May the King enjoy better health soon.

Lady Macbeth. I bid a kind good night to all of you.

[*Exeunt all except Macbeth and Lady Macbeth*

Macbeth. The ghost is eager to have revenge by shedding my blood. It is said that a murder cannot go unavenged. Even stones and trees are said bo betray a murderer. The science of divination and study of secret connections among different things have furnished through magpies, choughs and rooks, the clues leading to the disovery of even such a murderer who has done the crime most secretly. What time of night is it ?

Lady Macbeth. It is an uncertain hour of night nearing dawn.

Macbeth. What is your opinion about the attitude of Macduff who did not attend the banquet even though I commanded him as king to present himself ?

Lady Macbeth. Did you send for him, sir ?

Macbeth. I have just heard it incidentally, but now I will send a messenger to get confirmation. There is not even one lord in whose house I do not keep a paid agent to serve as spy. Tomorrow I will go early in the morning to meet the weird sisters whom I shall make to tell me more, for I am resolved to know even through worst means the worst fate that is in store for me. To secure my interest, I shall

by chance

All *causes*[1] shall give way : I am in blood
Stepp'd in so far that, should I *wade*[2] no more,
Returning were as *tedious*[3] as go o'er
Strange things I have in head, that will to hand ;
Which must be acted ere they may be *scann'd*[4]

Lady Macbeth. You lack the seasons of all natures, sleep.

Mac. Come, we'll to sleep. My strange and self-abuse
Is the initiate fear that wants hard use :
We are yet but young in deed. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE V. *A heath*

Thunder. Enter the threee Witches, *meeting* HECATE

Fist Witch. Why, how now, Hecate ! you look *angerly.*[5]

Hecate. Have I not reason, *beldams*[6] as you are,
Saucy[7] and *overbold* ?[8] How did you dare
To trade and traffic[9] with Macbeth
In riddles and affairs of death ;
And I, the *mistress*[10] of your charms,
The *close contriver*[11] of all harms,
Was never call'd to bear my part,
Or show the glory of our art ?
And, which is worse, all you have done
Hath been but for a *wayward*[12] son,
Spiteful[13] and *wrathful*[14] who, as others do,
Loves for his own ends, not for you.
But make amends now : get you gone,

1. Considerations.
2. Go.
3. Tiresome.
4. Scrutinized.
5. Angry.
6. Ugly old women.
7. Annoying.
8. Too bold to be good.
9. To have dealings with.
10. Queen
11. Secret plotter.
12. Perverse.
13. Malicious,
14. Full of anger.

abandon every scruple. I am marching in blood and have proceeded so far that even if I do not go any further, turning back would be as difficult as going farward. I have in my mind extraordinary plans which will be put in execation and have to be acted upon before they are examined critically.

Lady Macbeth. You need sleep which refreshes all.

Macbeth. Come, let us go to sleep. My strange self-delusion is only due to the fear which usually haunts all first offenders who are relieved of it through experience. We are yet raw criminals.

SCENE V. *A health*

Thunder. Enter the three Witches, meeting HECATE

First Witch. Well, Hecate? What does make you look so angry?

Hecate. Have I no cause to be angry, old hags, when you have acted with such an impudence and audacity? How did you dare to have dealings with Macbeth in fatal ambiguities, without calling me, who is the mistress of all charms and the secret plotter of all evils, to show the glory of our art of witchcraft? The worst thing is that you have done all this for a wilful person who is malicious and ill-tempered, and who like others is not really attached to you but seeks to utilize you for his own selfish end. You must now rectify your error. Leave this place and meet me in the

And at the *pit of Acheron*[1]
Meet me i' the morning : thither he
Will come to know his *destiny*[2] :
Your vessels and your *spells*[3] provide,
Your charms and every thing beside.
I am for the air ; this night I'll spend
Unto a *dismal*[4] and a *fatal*[5] *end*[6] :
Great business must be *wrought*[7] ere noon :
Upon the corner of the moon
There hangs a vaporous drop profound ;
I'll catch it ere it come to ground :
And that, distill'd by magic *sleights*[8],
Shall raise such artificial sprites
As by the strength of their *illusion*[9]
Shall draw him on to his *confusion*[10] :
He shall *spurn*[11] fate, scorn death, and bear
His hopes 'bove wisdom, grace and fear ;
And you all know *security*[12]
Is *mortals'*[13] chiefest enemy.

[*Music and a song within*, "Come away, come away, &c."

Hark ! I am call'd ; my little spirit, see,
Sits in a *foggy cloud*,[14] and stays for me. [*Exit.*

First Witch. Come, let's make haste ; she'll soon be back again. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE VI. *Forres, The palace*

Enter LENNOX *and another* Lord

Lennox. My former speeches have but hit your thoughts.

1. River in under-world.
2. Fate.
3. Charms
4. Sad.
5. Deadly.
6. purpose.
7. Done.
8. Arts.
9. Deceptive appearance
10. Destruction.
11. Reply.
12. Over-Confidence.
13. Man's
14. Dark cloud.

morning at the pit of Acheron where Macbeth will come to know his fate. You must bring there your cauldrons, magic incantations, charms and all necessary articles required for your purpose. I am now going up in the air and will spend this night in some sinister and terrible business. Something important has to be done before noon. A drop of vapour is hanging upon the lower edge of the moon and I shall catch it before it falls to the earth. When I have purified it by magical artifice, it will raise such spirits as will fascinate Macbeth and will tempt him to deeds leading him to destruction. He will defy fate, scorn death and entertain hopes, contrary to the dictates of wisdom, grace and fear. And all of you know that excessive self-confidence is the greatest enemy of man.

Music and a song within. 'Come away, come away,' etc.

Listen! I am called. See my familiar spirit sits on a foggy cloud and waits for me.

First Witch. Come, let us be quick because she will soon come back.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE VI. *Forres. The palace*

Enter LENNOX *and another* Lord

Lennox. What I told you has exactly coincided with your own ideas regarding Macbeth.

Which can interpret : only, I say,
Things have been strangely *borne*.[1] The gracious Duncan.
Was pitied of Macbeth : marry, he was dead :
And the *right-valiant*[2] Banquo walk'd too late ;
Whom, you may say, if't please you, Fleance kill'd,
For Fleance fled : men must not walk too late.
Who cannot want the thought, how *monstrous*[3]
It was for Malcolm and for Donalbain
To kill their gracious father ? damned fact !
How it did grieve Macbeth ! did he not straight
I pious rage the two *delinquents*[5] *tear*,[4]
That were the slaves of drink and *thralls*[6] of sleep ?
Was not that nobly done ? Ay, and wisely too ;
For 'twould have anger'd any heart alive
To hear the men don't. So that, I say,
He has borne all things well : and I do think.
That, had he Duncan's sons *under his key*[7]—
As, an't please heaven, he shall not—they should find
What 'twere to kill a father ; so should Fleance.
But, peace ! for from broad words, and 'cause he fail'd
His presence at the tyrant's feast, I hear
Macduff lives in disgrace : sir, can you tell
Where he bestows himself ?

Lord. The son of Duncan,
From whom this tyrant holds the due of birth,
Lives in the English court, and is received
Of the most pious *Edward*[8] with such grace
That the *malevolence*[9] of fortune nothing
Takes from his high respect : thither Macduff
Is gone to pray the *holy king*,[10] upon his aid

1. Carried on.
2. Very brave.
3. Inhuman.
4. Culprits.
5. Wound severely.
6. Captives.
7. In his prison.
8. Edward the Confessor of England.
9. Unkindness.
10. Edward.

Now your thoughts can supply the meaning of my words. I say only that the affairs have happened quite strangely. Macbeth mourned the death of gracious Duncan ostentatiously. His love for Duncan has displayed itself only when the king was already dead. Brave Banquo went out at a late hour and it may well be said that it was Fleance who murdered him, for he fled away. Such a state of affairs is prevailing that everybody should be careful not to be out of doors late at night. One cannot help thinking how unnatural it was for Malcolm and Donalbain to kill their kind father. It is a most wicked deed in fact ! Macbeth was overwhelmed with grief at the king's murder and in a fit of indignation killed the two grooms who were completely over-powered by intoxication and sleep. The murder of the grooms was not only a noble act but also a prudent one, because the tragedy of the king's murder could have stirred anger in any heart. Thus I must say that Macbeth has handled the whole affair very well. In my opinion he would have punished Duncan's sons for parricide if he had them as his prisoners. But by the grace of God he would never be able to do so. Anyhow, we should not say anything openly about the matter. Macduff has incurred the king's displeasure because he spoke in plain words and failed to attend the tyrant's feast. Can you tell me, sir, where Macduff is staying now ?

Lord. Duncan's eldest son, Malcolm, whose birthright has been usurped by this tyrant, Macbeth, is now living at the court of the English King, Edward, and has been so kindly received by the most virtuous monarch that he has not lost his repect in his misfortune of being an exile. Macduff, too, has gone to England in order to beg the saintly king to come to the aid of Malcolm

To wake Northumberland and warlike Siward :
That, by the help of these—with *Him*[1] above
To *ratify*[2] the work—we may again
Give to our tables meat, sleep to our nights,
Free from our feasts and banquets bloody knives,
Do faithful homage, and receive free honours ;
All which we pine for now : and this report
Hath so *exasperate*[3] the king that he
Prepares for some attempt of war.

Lennox. Sent he to Macduff ?

Lord. He did : and with an absolute "Sir not I,"
The *cloudy*[4] messenger turns me his back,
And hums, as who should say, "You'll *rue*[5] the time
That *clogs*[6] me with this answer."

Lennox. And *that*[7] well might
Advise him to a caution, to hold what distance
His wisdom can provide. Some holy angel
Fly to the court of England and unfold
His message ere he come ; that a swift blessing
May soon return to this our suffering country
Under a hand accursed !

Lord. I'll send my prayers with him.
[*Exeunt.*

ACT IV

SCENE I. *A cavern. In the middle, a boiling caldron*

Thunder. Enter the three Witches.

First Witch. Thrice the *brinded*[8] cat hath mew'd.

1. God.
2. Strengthen.
3. Made angry.
4. Gloomy
5. Be sorry for.
6. Burdens
7. The answer.
8. Striped.

and to secure the support of the Earl of Northumberland and warlike Siward, so that by the help of their forces and by God's favour, we may eat at our table again, and sleep in security at night without fearing that our food would be poisoned or we would be stabbed at banquets, pay homage to the rightful sovereign and freely enjoy honours for all of which we are pining now. The report of Macduff's flight to England has so exasperated Macbeth that he is making preparations for war.

Lennox. Did Macbeth send for Macduff ?

Lord. He did. Macduff flatly refused to come. The gloomy messenger turned his back muttering, as he wanted to say that Macduff would have to regret for his negative answer.

Lennox. That might reasonably warn him to be cautious, and to keep himself as far away from Macbeth as his wisdom might direct. I wish some holy angel to fly to the court of England in advance of Macduff and communicate his message to the English King, so that blessing may reach this tyrannously governed unfortunate country as soon as possible.

Lord. My prayers are also with Macduff.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT IV

SCENE I. *A cavern. In the middle, a boiling cauldron.*

Thunder. Enter the three Witches.

First Witch. The striped cat has mewed three times.

Second Witch. Thrice and once the *hedge-pig*[1] *whined*[2]

Third Witch. *Harpier*[3] cries "'tis time, 'tis time."

First Witch. Round about the *caldron*[4] go ;
In the poison'd *entrails*[5] throw,
Toad,[6] that under cold stone
Days and nights hast thirty-one
Swelter'd[7] *venom*[8] sleeping got,
Boil thou first i' the *charmed pot*[9].

All. *Double,*[10] double toil and trouble ;
Fire burn and caldron *bubble*[11],

Second Witch. *Fillet*[12] of a *fenny snake,*[13]
In the caldron boil and bake ;
Eye of *newt*[14] and toe of frog,
Wool[15] of bat and tongue of dog,
Adder's[16] *fork*[17] and *blind-worm's*[18] sting,
Lizard's leg and *howlet's*[19] wing,
For a charm of powerful trouble,
Like a hell-broth boil and bubble.

All. Double, double toil and trouble ;
Fire burn and caldron bubble.

1. Hedge-hog.
2. Produced sound.
3. Name of spirit.
4. Large boiling-vessel.
5. Intestines.
6. A favourite of witches
7. Given out.
8. Poision.
9. Cauldron.
10. Two-fold.
11. Boil.
12. A slice
13. Marshy snake.
14. Lizard
15. Soft hair.
16. Snake.
17. Forked tongue.
18. Snake-like worm.
19. Owlet.

Second Witch. The hedge-hog has cried four times.

Third Witch. The spirit named Harpier cries that it is proper time for us to begin our work.

First Witch. Let us move round about the cauldron and throw in it the intestines of poisonous animals. Let us first boil in the magic vessel the toad which had exuded poison under a cold stone for thirty-one days and was caught while sleeping.

All. [*Jointly*]. Try hard to redouble our efforts, so that the fire may burn fast and the substance in the cauldron may bubble up.

Second Witch. Let us boil and try in the cauldron the slice of a marshy serpent, the eye of a water lizard, the toe of a frog, the wool of bat, and the tongue of a dog and the forked tongue of a snake, the sting of a blind-worm, the leg of a lizard and the wing of an owlet, so as to prepare a powerful charm highly efficacious in creating mischief like the hellbroth itself.

All. [*Jointly.*] Let us redouble our efforts and try hard to burn the fire under the cauldron so that it may bubble up soon.

Third Witch. Scale of dragon, tooth of wolf,
Witches' *mummy*[1], *maw and gulf*[2]
Of the ravin'd salt-sea shark.
Root of *hemlock*[3] digg'd i' *the dark*[4],
Liver of *blaspheming*[5] Jew,
Gall of goat, and *slips of yew*[6]
Sliver'd[7] in the moon's eclipse,
Nose of Turk, and Tartar's lips,
Finger of birth-strangled babe
Ditch-deliver'd[8] by a *drab*[9],
Make the *gruel*[10] thick and *slab*[11]:
Add thereto a tiger's *chaudron*[12]
For the ingredients of our caldron

All. Double, double toil and trouble;
Fire burn and caldron bubble.

Second Witch. Cool it with a *baboon's*[13] blood,
Then the charm is firm and good.

Enter HECATE

Hecate. O, well done! I *commend*[14] your pains;
And every one shall share i' the gains:
And now about the caldron sing,
Like *elves*[15] and fairies in a ring,
Enchanting[16] all that you put in.

[*Music and song,* "Black spirits," &c.
[*Hecate retires.*

1. Preserved dead body.
2. Stomach and gullet.
3. Poisonous plant.
4. At night.
5. Talking ill of Divine Being.
6. Strips of a poisonons tree.
7. Cut off.
8. Thrown into ditch.
9. Loose charactered woman.
10. Broth.
11. Slimy
12. Entrails
13. Monkey
14. Praise.
15. Spirits
16. Making magical.

Third Witch. Let us make the broth thick and sticky by adding to it the scale of a dragon, the tooth of a wolf, embalmed dead body of a witch, the stomach of a sea-shark, the root of hemlock which is dug out in the dark, the liver of a blaspheming Jew, the bile of a goat, the twig of a yew tree that has been cut at the time of the moon's eclipse, the nose of a Turk, the lips of a Tartar, the finger of a child strangled at its birth born of a whore in a ditch by the road side. Let us then add the entrails of a tiger to make the gruel in our cauldron thicker and sticky.

All. (*Jointly*). Try hard to redouble our efforts, so that the fire may burn fast and the broth may bubble up in the cauldron.

Second Witch. Let us cool it with monkey's blood so that the charm may be made strong and effective.

Enter HECATE

Hecate. O, that is all well done by you! I admire you for the labour that you have done, and assure every one of you a due share in the gains of this enterprise. Now begin your dance and chorus song round the cauldron like spirits and fairies in a ring—thus rendering magical whatever you put in the magic pot.

(*Music and song*: "Black Spirits," &c. *Hecate retires*).

Second Witch. By the pricking of my thumbs,
Something wicked this way comes :
Open locks,
Whoever knocks !

Enter MACBETH

Macb. How now, you secret, black, and midnight hags !
What is't you do ?

All. A deed without a name

Macbeth. I *conjure*[1] you, by that which you profess,
Howe'er you come to know it, answer me :
Though you *untie*[2] the winds and let them *fight*[3]
Against the churches ; though the *yesty*[4] waves
Confound[5] and swallow *navigation*[6] up ;
Though *bladed*[7] corn be lodged and trees blown down ;
Though castles *topple*[8] on their warders' heads ;
Though palaces and pyramids do slope
Their heads to their foundations ; though the treasure
Of nature's *germens*[9] tumble all together,
Even till destruction sicken ; answer me
To what I ask you.

First Witch. Speak.

Second Witch. Demand,

Third Witch. We'll answer.

First Witch. Say, if thou'dst rather hear it from our mouths,
Or from our masters ?

Macbeth. Call 'em, let me see 'em.

1. Solemnly calls upon.
2. Let loose.
3. Blow against.
4. Foaming.
5. Destroy.
9. Navy.
7. Unripe corn.
8. Fall.
9. Germs.

Second Witch. From the itching sensation in my thumbs, I can judge that something is approaching this way. Let the door be opened if somebody knocks.

Enter MACBETH

Macbeth. You black and supernatural witches, what are you doing at midnight ?

All. A nameless deed.

Macbeth. I call upon you, in the name of your magic, to answer me by whatever methods you may draw the knowledge even though you may let loose the stormy winds which blow violently against church steeples or though the seething waves may wreck the ships, the green corn be beaten down and trees may be uprooted and though castles may fall down on the heads of their sentinels, the palaces and pyramids may topple down to the ground and seeds of life in nature be destroyed completely, till even destruction grows tired of its work, yet I urge you to answer my questions.

First Witch. Speak out your questions.

Second Witch. Demand what you wish.

Third Witch. We shall supply answers to your questions.

First Witch. Tell us if you would prefer to have your answers from our own mouths or from those of our familiar spirits who are our masters.

Macbeth. Call your masters. I wish to see them.

First Witch. Pour in *sow's*[1] blood, that hath eaten
Her nine *farrow*;[2] grease that's sweaten
From the murderer's *gibbet*[3] throw
Into the flame.

All. Come, high or low;
Thyself and *office*[4] *deftly*[5] show!

Thunder. First Apparition: *an armed Head.*

Macb. Tell me, thou unknown power,—

First Witch. He knows thy thought:
Hear his speech, but say thou *naught*[6].

First Apparition. Macbeth! Macbeth! Macbeth! beware Macduff:
Beware the thane of Fife. *Dismiss me*[7]: enough.
[*Descends.*

Macb. Whate'er thou art, for thy good caution, thanks;
Thou hast *harp'd*[8] my fear aright: but one word more,—

First Witch. He will not be commanded: here's another,
More *potent*[9] than the first.

Thunder. Second Apparition: *a bloody Child.*

Second Apparition. Macbeth! Macbeth! Macbeth!

Macbeth. Had I three ears, I'ld hear thee.

Second Apparition. Be bloody, bold, and resolute; laugh to scorn
The power of man, for none of woman born
Shall harm Macbeth, [*Descends.*

Macbeth. Then live, Macduff: what need I fear of thee?
But yet I'll make assurance double sure.

1. Female pig.
2. Litter of pigs.
3. Gallows
4. Work in hand.
5. Cleverly
6. Nothing.
7. Let me go.
8. Repeated.
9. Powerful.

First Witch. Let us pour into the magic pot the blood of a sow which has eaten up her litter of nine pigs. Let us then throw into the fire the grease which has oozed out of the gallows of a hangman.

All. O, you spirits, come from the place where you are whether that be the heights of heavens or depths of the earth. Come and show yourselves as well as your skill in a clever way.

Thunder. First Apparition : *an armed* Head·

Macbeth. Tell me, you mysterious power,——

First Witch. He knows your thoughts. Hear what he says, but do not speak to him.

First Apparition. Macbeth ! Macbeth ! Macbeth ! Beware of Macduff. Take care of the thane of Fife. Now dismiss me. I have told you enough. [*Descends*]

Macbeth. I thank you for your kind warning, without minding what you are. You have hit upon my fear exactly, but I wish to ask you one more question.

First Witch. He will not obey your order. Here is another spirit more powerful than the First Apparition.

Thunder. Second Apparition : *a blood-stained child.*

Second Apparition. Macbeth ! Macbeth ! Macbeth !

Macbeth. Speak. I am so impatient to hear you that if I had three ears I would have placed all at your disposal.

Second Apparition. You must shed blood, be reckless and resolute. Look with contempt at the power of man, because no one born of a woman can ever injure you. [*Descends*]

Macbeth. Then let Macduff live. There is no need of fearing Macduff. Still I shall manage to have double security against him and take a

And take a bond of fate : thou shalt not live ;
That I may tell pale-hearted fear it lies,
And sleep in spite of thunder.

Thunder. Third Apparition : *a Child crowned, with a tree in his hand.*

What is this,
That rises like the *issue*[1] of a king,
And wears upon his baby-brow the *round*
And top of sovereignty[2] ?

All. Listen, but speak not to't.

Third Apparition. Be *lion-mettled*[3], proud ; and take no care
Who *chafes*[4], who *frets*[5], or where conspirers are :
Macbeth shall never *vanquish'd*[6] be until
Great Birnam wood to high Dunsinane hill
Shall come against him. [*Descends.*

Macbeth. That will never be :
Who can *impress*[7] the forest, bid the tree
Unfix his earth-bound root ? Sweet *bodements*[8] ! good !
Rebellion's head, rise never till the wood
Of Birnam rise, and our high-placed Macbeth
Shall live the lease of nature, *pay his breath*[9]
To time and mortal custom. Yet my heart
Throbs to know one thing : tell me, if your art
Can tell so much : shall Banquo's issue ever
Reign in this kingdom ?

All. Seek to know no more.

Macbeth. I will be satisfied : deny me this,
And an eternal curse fall on you ! Let me know.

1. Child.
2. Crown,
3. Courageous and fierce like a lion.
4. Rebels.
5. Rages.
6. Conquered.
7. Press into service.
8. Perdictions.
9. Die.

pledge from fate. You shall not be kept alive so that fear may no more make me a coward and I may sleep peacefully in the midst of dangers.

Thunder. Third Apparition : *a crowned Child with a tree in its hand.*

What is this that appears like a prince of royal blood with a coronet—the symbol of royalty —upon his baby-brow ?

All. You must listen calmly without addresing it.

Third Apparition. Be daring and fierce like a lion, proud, and never mind who fumes and frets or who plots against you. Macbeth shall never be defeated until the great Birnam wood moves against him up to high Dunsinane hill.

[*Descends.*]

Macbeth. That is practically impossible. Who has power to compel a forest into service or command a tree to uproot itself ? These are sweet prophecies ! I am quite safe. The head of rebellion shall never rise up in revolt till the forest of Birnam uproots itself and moves. So royal Macbeth shall live the normal span of life and die a natural death like others. Yet I am eager to know one thing. Tell me, if your art can help you, whether Banquo's descendants shall ever reign in this kingdom ?

All. Do not crave for more information.

Macbeth. My curiosity must be satisfied. If you refuse to answer this question, you will be damned for ever. Let me know why is that

Why sinks that caldron? and what noise is this?
[*Hautboys.*

First Witch. Show!

Second Witch. Show!

Third Witch. Show!

All. Show his eyes, and *grieve*[1] his heart;
Come like shadows, so depart!

A show of Eight Kings, *the last with a glass in his hand*; BANQUO'S Ghost *following*

Macbeth. Thou art too like the spirit of Banquo; down!
Thy crown does *sear*[2] mine eyeballs: and thy hair,
Thou other *gold-bound*[3] brow, is like the first:
A third is like the former. Filthy hags!
Why do you show me this? A fourth? Start, eyes!
What, will the line stretch out to the *crack of doom*[4]?
Another yet? A seventh? I'll see no more:
And yet the eighth appears, who bears a glass
Which shows me many more; and some I see
That twofold balls and treble sceptres carry:
Horrible sight! Now I see 'tis true;
For the blood-bolter'd Banquo smiles upon me,
And points at them for his. What, is this so?

First Witch. Ay, sir, all this is so: but why
Stands Macbeth thus amazedly?
Come, sisters cheer we up his sprites,
And show the best of our delights:
I'll charm the air to give a sound,
While you perform your *antic*[5] round;
That this great king may kindly say
Our duties did his welcome pay.

1. Pain.
2. Burn.
3. Crowned.
4. The Day of Judgment.
5. Fantastic.

cauldron sinking down? What is that noise?

[*Sound of flutes.*]

First Witch. Let him see for himself!

Second Witch. Let him see!

Third Witch. Show him.

All Witches. Let him see for himself and feel pain in his heart. Come like shadows and depart like shadows.

A show of eight kings, *the last with a glass in his hand*; BANQUO'S Ghost *following.*

Macbeth. [*Addressing the first king*] You closely resemble the ghost of Banquo. Begone! Your crown blinds my eyes. [*Addressing the second king*] O, you second king, your hair with crown of gold, looks like that of the first. *Addressing the Witches*] You dirty hags! Why do you show me all this? [*Staring at the other king*] Is there a fourth king? May my eyes dash out of their sockets so that I may not be able to see this unbearable sight! Will this line continue to rule Scotland till the day of judgment? I see still another! Is there a seventh also? I wish to see no more. But there appears another—the eighth one—carrying a mirror which shows a number of his successors, some of whom carry two orbs and three sceptres. It is a terrible sight! Now I understand that the prediction of the Witches about the descendants of Banquo becoming kings is true, because I see Banquo covered with blood. He smiles at me and points to his successors as if to show that they are his descendants. [*Apparitions vanish*] What, is it really so?

First Witch. Yes, sir, all this shall be just like that. But why do you stand confused in this way? Come, sisters, let us cheer up Macbeth's spirits and display to him our best entertainment. I will enchant the air and make it produce music, while you should dance in a circle fantastically, so that this great king may be pleased to say that we treated him respectfully and welcomed him at his visit to us.

[*Music. The Witches dance, and then vanish, with Hecate.*

Macb. Where are they? Gone? Let this *pernicious hour*[1]
Stand aye accursed in the calendar!
Come in, without there!

Enter LENNOX

Lennox. What's your grace's *will*[2]?
Macbeth. Saw you the weird sisters?
Lennox. No, my lord.
Macbeth. Came they not by you?
Lennox. No, indeed, my lord.
Macbeth. Infected be the air whereon they ride.
And damn'd all those that trust them! I did hear
The galloping of horse: who was't came by?
Lennox. *'Tis two or three*[3], my lord, *that*[4] bring you *word*[5]
Macduff is fled to England.
Macbeth. Fled to England!
Lennox. Ay, my good lord.
Macbeth. Time, thou *anticipatest*[6] my dread exploits:
The flighty purpose never is o'ertook
Unless the deed go with it: from this moment
The very *firstlings*[7] of my heart shall be
The firstlings of my hand. And even now,
To crown my thoughts with acts, be it thought and done:
The castle of Macduff I will surprise;
Seize upon[8] Fife; *give to the edge o' the sword*.[9]
His wife, his babes and all unfortunate souls

1. Detestable hour.
2. Order.
3. There are two or three men.
4. Who.
5. News.
6. Prevent me from executing.
7. First.
8. Occupy
9. Slay.

[*Music. The Witches dance, and then vanish with Hecate*]

Macbeth. Where have the witches gone? Have they really vanished? Let this evil hour stand cursed for ever in the calendar! Come in, all of you standing outside!

Enter LENNOX

Lennox. What is the command of your majesty?

Macbeth. Did you see the Witches?

Lennox. No, your majesty, I did not.

Macbeth. Did they not pass by you just now?

Lennox. No, your majesty, they did certainly not.

Macbeth. I wish God to infect with poison the air through which they fly, and also wish that all those who believe their words may be accursed. I heard the sound of horses galloping past. Who had come this way?

Lennox. Your majesty, two or three messengers have brought the news that Macduff has fled away to England.

Macbeth. What! Fled to England.

Lennox. Yes, your majesty, he fled to England.

Macbeth. [*Aside*] O, time you steal a march over me and prevent me from executing my fearful plans. Fleeting aims are never fulfilled unless action is combined by resolution. From this moment onwards I am resolved to quickly act on my plans as soon as they come to my mind. Even now I will translate my thoughts in deeds, let my action and intention run together: I will storm the castle of Macduff and confiscate his property which is in his possession as thane of Fife and also kill his wife, his children and every person,

That trace him in his line[1]. No boasting like a fool :
This deed I'll do before this purpose cool :
But no more sights !—When are these gentlemen ?
Come, bring me where they are. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II. *Fife.* MACDUFF'S *castle.*

Enter Lady MACDUFF, *her* Son, *and* ROSS.

Lady Macd. What had he done, to make him fly the land ?

Roos. You must have patience, madam.

Lady Macduff. He had none :
His flight was madness : when our actions do not,
Our fears do make us traitors.

Ross. You know not
Whether it was his wisdom or his fear.

Lady Macduff. Wisdom ! to leave his wife, to leave his babes,
His *mansion*[2] and his titles in a place
From whence himself does fly ? He loves us not ;
He wants the natural touch : for the poor wren,
The most *diminutive*[3] of birds, will fight,
Her young ones in her nest, against the owl.
All is the fear, and nothing is the love ;
As little is the wisdom, where the flight
So runs against all reason.

Ross My dearest *coz*[4]
I pray you, *school yourself*[5] : but for your husband,
He's noble, wise, judicious, and best knows
The fits o' the season[6]. I dare not speak much further :
But cruel are the times, when we are traitors,

1. Belong to his family.
2. House.
3. Small.
4. Cousin.
5. Control your feelings.
6. Critical times.

who has the misfortune of being related to him by blood. It is no boasting like that of a fool. I will do this deed before the heat of my resolution cools down. I shall see no more supernatural shows in future. [*To Lennox*] Where are those gentlemen who brought the news about Macduff's flight. Come, conduct me to the place where they wait. [*Exeunt*]

SCENE II. *Fife.* MACDUFF'S *Castle*

Enter Lady MACDUFF, *her* son *and* ROSS.

Lady Macduff. What crime had my husband done, to force him to run away from Scotland.

Ross. You must keep patience, madam.

Lady Macduff. But he had no patience to even inform me. His flight was an act of sheer folly. When our acts are not treacherous our fears make us act as we are traitors.

Ross. You do not know whether his flight is an act of wisdom or fear.

Lady Macduff. Wisdom! Is it wisdom to leave his wife, children, house and titles in a place from where he himself fled away? He has no love for us. He lacks the natural affection, because even a humble and helpless creature like the wren will fight the owl so as to protect her young ones when attacked in its nest. It is plain that my husband has no love for the family. He flew for personal fears. Obviously enough there can be no wisdom in his flight since it runs counter to all logic.

Ross. My dearest cousin, I entreat you to control you feelings. So far as your husband is concerned, I may assure you that he is noble, wise and discreet and knows best how to act in response to the needs of the time. I do not think it proper to disclose all that I know but this much I must say that the time is bad because we may be accused as traitors.

And do not know ourselves ; when we hold rumour.
From what we fear, yet know not what we fear,
But float upon a wild and violent sea.
Each way and move. I take my leave of you :
Shall not be long but I'll be here again :
Things at the worst will cease, or else climb upward
To what they were before. My pretty cousin,
Blessing upon you !

Lady Macduff. *Father'd he is*[1], and yet he's fatherless.

Ross. I am so much a fool, should I stay longer,
It would be my disgrace and your discomfort :
I take my leave at once. [*Exit.*

Lady Macduff. *Sirrah*[2], your father's dead :
And what will you do now ? How will you live ?

Son. As birds do mother.

Lady Macduff. What, with worms and flies ?

Son. With what I get, I mean ; and so do they,

Lady Macduff. Poor bird ! thou'ldst never fear the net nor *lime*[3],
The pitfall not the *gin*[4].

Son. Why should I, mother ? Poor birds they are not set for.
My father is not dead, for all your saying.

Lady Macduff. Yes, he is dead : how wilt thou do for a father ?

Son. Nay, how will you do for a husband ?

Lady Macd. Why, I can buy me twenty at any market

Son. Then you'll buy 'em to sell again.

Lady Macduff. Thou speak'st with all thy wit, and yet, i' faith,

1. He has a father.
2. Sir.
3. Bird-lime.
4. Trap.

though we ourselves do not know why. It is due to our fears that we believe every idle rumour and yet we do not know what we are afraid of. We resemble creatures floating on a violent sea and tossed hither and thither by every wave. Now I take leave of you. It will not be long before I am back again. Even the worst things well either stop or improve gradually and will come back to their former state of prosperity. [*To Macduff's son*]. My sweet cousin, I wish you God's blessing.

Lady Macduff. This baby is now a fatherless son of a living father.

Ross. It will now be foolish for me to stay here any longer, for I shall give way to tears whereby I will disgrace myself and disgrace you. So I bid you farewell at once. [*Exit.*

Lady Macduff. Well, poor child, your father is dead. What will you do now and how will you manage to live ?

Son. Mother, I shall live as birds do.

Lady Macduff. What, will you live by eating worms and flies ?

Son. I mean that I shall live by whatever food I get just as the birds do.

Lady Macduff. Poor bird ! You do not know that there are dangerous things like nets, birdlime, traps and snares to be afraid of.

Son. Why should I fear them mother ? Poor birds are not hunted and, in spite of all that you say, my father is not dead.

Lady Macduff. But he is dead. How will you get on without a father now ?

Son. Nay, the question is how will you get on without a husband now ?

Lady Macduff. Why I can buy twenty such husbands for myself at any market I like.

Son. So you will start a trade—buy husbands to sell again.

Lady Macduff. You speak with all your natural intelligence and yet the fact is that

With wit enough for thee.

Son. Was my father a traitor, mother?

Lady Macduff. Ay, that he was.

Son. What is a traitor?

Lady Macduff. Why, one that swears and lies.

Son. And be all traitors that do so?

Lady Macduff. Every one that does so is a traitor, and must be hanged

Son. And must they all be hanged that swear and lie?

Lady Macduff. Every one.

Son. Who must hang them?

Lady Macduff. Why, the honest men.

Son. Then the liars and swearers are fools; for there are liars and swearers *enow*[1] to beat the honest men, and hang up them.

Lady Macduff. Now, God help thee; poor monkey! But how *wilt*[2] though do for a father?

Son. If he were dead, you'ld weep for him: if you would not, it were a good sign that I should quickly have a new father.

Lady Macduff. Poor *prattler*[3], how thou talk'st;

Enter a Messenger.

Messenger. Bless you, fair dame! I am not to you known,
Though in your state of honour I am perfect.
I *doubt*[4] some danger does approach you nearly.
If you will take a *homely*[5] man's advice.
Be not found here; *hence*[6] with your *little ones*[7].
To fright you thus, methinks, I am too savage:
To do worse to you were fell cruelty,

1. Enough
2. Will.
3. Talkative.
4. I am afraid.
5. Simple.
6. Go away.
7. Children.

your wit is ahead of your age.

Son. Mother, is it a fact that my father was a traitor?

Lady Macduff. Yes, to me he was.

Son. What is a traitor?

Lady Macduff. One who swears an oath and then violates it.

Son. Are all those traitors who break oaths?

Lady Macduff. Yes, everyone that does so is a traitor, and must be put to death.

Son. And must all be put to death who swear and lie?

Lady Macduff. Yes, every one of them must be hanged.

Son. Who must hang such persons?

Lady Macduff. Honest men do hang them.

Son. Then the people who swear and lie are fools, because there are enough of them to beat and hang the honest men.

Lady Macduff. Now, may God protect you! my poor monkey, but what will you do without a father?

Son. If he were really dead, you would be weeping for him, but as you do not, it shows you will marry again and I will have a new father soon.

Lady Macduff. My poor talker! How sweet you talk!

Enter a Messenger.

Messenger. God bless you, fair madam! I am not known to you, but I know your noble rank quite well. I am afraid to say that you are in the range of a great danger. If you take the advice of a humble man, leave this place at once. Fly away with your children. I feel myself as acting rudely to frighten you in this way, but it would be a gross cruelty, in my opinion, if I let

Which is too *nigh*[1] your person. Heaven preserve you !
I dare abide no longer. [*Exit.*

Lady Macduff. *Whither*[2] should I fly ?
I have done no harm. But I remember now
I am in this earthly world ; where to do harm
Is often *laudable*[3], to do good sometime
Accounted[4] dangerous folly ; why then, alas,
Do I put up that womanly defence,
To say I have done no harm ?

Enter Murderers.

What are these faces ?

First Murderer. Where is your husband ?

Lady Macduff. I hope, in no place so *unsanctified*[5]
Where such as thou *mayst*[6] find him.

First Murderer. He is a traitor.

Son. Thou liest, thou *shag-ear'd villain*[7].

First Murderer What, you egg ! [*Stabbing him.*
Young *fry of treachery*[8] !

Son. He has killed me, mother :
Run away, I pray you ! [*Dies.*

[*Exit Lady Macduff, crying* "Murder !" *and pursued by the Murderers.*

SCENE III. *England. Before the* King's *palace.*

Enter MALCOLM *and* MACDUFF.

Malcolm. Let us seek out some *desolate shade*[9], and there.
Weep our sad bosoms empty.

Malcolm. Let us rather
Hold fast the *mortal*[10] sword, and like *good*[11] men
Bestride[12] our downfall'n *birthdom*[13] : each new morn
New widows howl, new orphans cry, new sorrows.
Strike heaven on the face, that it resounds
As if it felt with Scotland and *yell'd*[14] out
Like syllable of dolour

1. Near.
2. Where.
3. Praiseworthy.
4. Considered.
5. Unholy.
6. May.
7. Rough-haired
8. Offspring of a traitor.
9. Lonely shaded place.
10. Death-dealing
11. Brave.
12. Stand over for protection.
13. Home-land.
14. Cried

something worse befall you. The danger is very near you. May God protect you ! I cannot dare to stay here any longer.

Lady Macduff. Where should I hide myself. I have done no wrong to any one. But now I remember that I lived in a wicked world where an evil deed is often considered praiseworthy and where a good deed is considered to be dangerous foolishness. Why in such circumstances should I put up the feminine defence that I have done no wrong ?

[*Enter* Murderers]

Who are these dreadful men ?

First Murderer. Where is your husband ?

Lady Macduff. I hope he is not in such a wicked place where rascals like you may find him.

First Murderer. He is a traitor.

Son. You hairy villain, you lie.

First Murderer. What, you little rascal ! [*Stabs the boy*]
Offspring of a traitor.

Son. He has killed me, mother. I pray you, fly away for your life. [*Dies.*

[*Exit Lady Macduff crying 'Murder' ! and followed by Murderers*]

SCENE III. *England. Before the King's Palace.*

Enter MALCOLM *and* MACDUFF

Malcolm. Let us search out some lonely spot where we may relieve our hearts of sorrow by shedding tears.

Macduff. We should rather take up arms like brave soldiers to defend our ruined country stoutly. New widows and new orphans cry every morning, new sorrows and lamentations resound in the sky every morning and it seems that the heaven echoes in sympathy with Scotland and cries in the same lamentable pitch.

Malcolm. What I believe, I'll *wail*[1];
What know, believe; and what I can redress,
As I shall find the time to friend, I will
What you have spoke, it may be so *perchance*[2].
This tyrant, whose *sole*[3] name blisters our tongues
Was once thought honest: you have loved him well;
He hath not *touch'd*[4] you yet. I am young; but something
You may deserve of him through me, and wisdom
To offer up a weak, poor, innocent lamb
To *appease*[5] an angry god.

Macduff. I am not treacherous.

Malcolm. But Macbeth is.
A good and virtuous nature may *recoil*[6].
In an *imperial charge*[7]. But I shall crave your pardon;
That which you are, my thoughts cannot *transpose*[8].
Angels are bright still, though the brightest fell:
Though all things foul would *wear*[9] the *brows of grace*[10],
Yet grace must still look so.

Macduff. I have lost my hopes.

Mal. Perchance even there where I did find my doubts.
Why in that *rawness*[11] left you wife and child,
Those precious motives, those strong knots of love,
Without leave-taking? I pray you,
Let not my *jealousies*[12] be your dishonours,
But my own safeties: you may be rightly *just*[13],
Whatever I shall think

1. Weep.
2. Perhaps.
3. Mere.
4. Harmed
5. Soften the anger.
6. Degenerate.
7. Royal mandate.
8. Denature.
9. Have.
10. Virtuous loolk.
11. Hurry.
12. Suspicions.
13. Upright

Malcolm. I believe in weeping only at this moment and believe only what I know. I will try to remedy these wrongs when the time is ripe for it. What you have told me may be true. This tyrant whose very name tortures our tongues was once considered to be honest whom you yourself used to love. He has done you no harm. I am no doubt young but you may deserve some reward fram Macbeth by betraying me, and it would be prudent on your part to make sacrifice of a poor and innocent lamb like myself to pacify an angry God.

Macduff. I am not treacherous.

Malcolm. But Macbeth is treacherous, and an honest and virtuous man as you are, may go aside from the right path under the orders of the king. But I seek your pardon for suspecting you to be treacherous. Your basic character cannot undergo a change by my suspicions. Angels are more glorious though the brightest among them was expelled from heaven. Although all wicked and base things wear the mask of beauty and innocence, yet beauty and virtue must remain unchanged in appearance.

Macduff. All my hopes regarding you have been dashed to the ground.

Malcolm. Probably it is due to the same reason that made me hold you in suspicion. The question is why have you left your wife and children behind in such thoughtless haste ? How is it that you did not even bid them farewell, though they are the strongest motives of your actions and though they are tied to you by strong chains of love ? I request you not to take my suspicions as aiming to insult you in any way. I suspect people as a precaution to ensure my personal safety. Whatever my suspicions may be, you may still be perfectly honest.

Macduff. Bleed, bleed, poor country !
Great tyranny, lay thou thy basis sure,
For goodness dare not check thee ! wear thou thy wrongs,
The title is *affeer'd*[1] ! Fare thee well, lord :
I would not be the villain that thou think'st
For the whole space that's in the tyrant's grasp,
And the rich East *to boot*[2],

Malcolm. Be not offended :
I speak not as in the absolute fear of you.
I think our country sinks beneath the yoke ;
It weeps, *it bleeds*[3], and each new day a *gash*[4]
Is added to her wounds : I think, withal,
There would be hands uplifted in my right ;
And here from *gracious England*[5] have I offer
Of *goodly thousands*[6] : but, for all this,
When I shall *tread*[7] upon the tyrant's head,
Or *wear*[8] it on my sword, yet my poor country
Shall have more vices than it had before,
More suffer and more sundry ways than ever,
But him that shall succeed.

Macduff. What should he be ?

Malcolm. It is myself I mean : in whom I know
All the *particulars*[9] of vice so *grafted*[10]
That, when they shall be *open'd*[11], *black*[12] Macbeth
Will seem as pure as snow, and the poor state
Esteem[13] him as a lamb, being compared
With my *confineless*[14] *harms*[15].

Macduff. Not in the *legions*[16]
Of horrid hell can come a devil more *damn'd*[17]
In evils to top Macbeth.

1. Established.
2. In addition to that.
3. Murders are committed in it.
4. Wound.
5. Gracious king of England.
6. Thousands of good soldiers
7. Walk.
8. Carry.
9. Qualities.
10. Planted
11. Blossomed.
12. Evil.
13. Consider.
14. Unlimited.
15. Evils.
16. Army.
17. Wicked.

Macduff. O, my wretched country, bleed and suffer. O, great tyrant, set your foundations more firmly, because goodness is not bold enough to arrest your progress. You may continue in your career of crime because your title to them is now established. Farewell, my lord. I will not be a traitor as you think me to be for all the lands in Scotland and the rich Eastern countries.

Malcolm. Please do not feel insulted. I do dot say all this because I actually suspect you of treachery. I believe that our country is oppressed under the rule of the tyrant. People are in great distress and every day fresh disasters are added to their troubles. I also feel that many of my countrymen will champion my cause and fight on my side. The king of England has offered to me military aid with thousands of soldiers but notwithstanding all these facilities for overthrowing Macbeth, when I shall trample upon the tyrant's head, or carry it on the point of my sword, my unfortunate country shall have more political wrongs than it has suffered so far. It will suffer in numerous ways at the hands of the person who will succeed Macbeth.

Macduff. What kind of person could he possibly be ?

Malcolm. I am referring to myself. I know that all sorts of evils are so firmly rooted in me that when they manifest themselves, even black Macbeth will appear as pure snow, and the suffering country will regard him as a lamb, innocent and meek, when compared with my unlimited wickedness.

Macduff. Not even among the numerous host of the devils inhabiting the dreadful hell there could be one surpassing Macbeth in wickedness.

Malcolm. I grant him bloody,
Luxurious, *avaricious,*[1] false, deceitful,
Sudden, [2] malicious, *smacking*[3] of every sin
That has a name : but there's no *bottom,*[4] none,
In my *voluptuousness*[5] and my desire
All *continent impediments*[6] would o'erbear,
That did oppose my will : better Macbeth
Than such a one to reign.

Macduff. *Boundless intemperance*[7]
In nature is a tyranny ; it hath been
The untimely emptying of the happy throne,
And fall of many kings. But fear not yet
To take upon you what is yours : you may
Convey your pleasures in a spacious plenty,
And yet seem cold, the time you may so *hoodwink*[8]

Malcolm. With this there grows
In my most *ill-composed affection*[9] such
A stanchless avarice that, were I king,
I should *cut off*[10] the nobles for their lands ;
Desire his jewels and this other's house :
And my more-having would be as a sauce
To make me hunger more : that I should *forge*[11]
Quarrels unjust against the good and loyal,
Destroying them for wealth.

1. Greedy.
2. Passionate.
3. Participating in.
4. End.
5. Craving for sensual gratification.
6. Virtuous hurdle.
7. Unrestrained indulgences
8. Deceive.
9. Bad disposition.
10. Kill.
11. Invent

Malcolm. I admit that he is blood-thirsty, fond of wicked pleasures, greedy, hypocritical, false, deceitful, whimsical, malicious and guilty of every known sin existing in the world. But there is no limit to my lustfulness. All the restraining obstacles opposing my will are easily thrown down by my desire. It is better to keep Macbeth as a king than instal a profligate like myself on the throne.

Macduff. Unchecked sexual indulgence is in its very nature as condemnable as tyranny. It has led many kings to untimely dethronement and ruin. But you should not hesitate to take back the throne which belongs to you. You are at liberty to secretly satisfy your desires and yet wear an appearance of chastity before the world in public life.

Malcolm. In addition to my sexual intemperance, my evil nature has such unquenchable greed that if I were a king, I would kill all nobles to take their lands into my possession, desire to have the jewels of one and the house of another noble. Besides that the more I would have, the more I would yearn for additional property, and to get more I shall concoct false pretexts to quarrel against good and loyal subjects and bring them to ruin for plundering their wealth.

Macduff. This avarice
Sticks deeper, grows with more *pernicious*[1] root
Than summer-seeming lust, and it hath been
The sword of our slain kings : yet do not fear ;
Scotland hath *foisons*[2] to fill up your will
Of your mere own : all these are portable,
With other graces weigh'd.

Malcolm. But I have none : the king-becoming graces,
As justice, *verity*[3], *temperance*[4], *stableness*[5],
Bounty[6], perseverance, mercy, *lowliness*[7],
Devotion, patience, courage, fortitude,
I have no relish of them, but abound
In the division of each several crime,
Acting it many ways. Nay, had I power, I should
Pour the sweet milk of *concord*[8] into hell,
Uproar the universal peace, confound
All unity on earth.

Macduff. O, Scotland, Scotland !

Malcolm. If such a one be fit to govern, speak :
I am as I have spoken.

Macduff. Fit to govern !
No, not to live. O nation miserable,
With an untitled tyrant bloody-scepter'd,

1. Harmful.
2. Rich harvests.
3. Truthfulness.
4. Self-restraint.
5 Firmness.
6. Generosity.
7. Humility,
8. Harmony,

Macduff. Greediness is more deep rooted and injurious than lust, which is short-lived like summer. It has been the cause of utter ruin and murders of our kings. Yet, you should not worry because Scotland has plenty of rich resources to satisfy your greed by supplying you your own wealth in abundance. All these vices may be tolerated if they are counter-balanced by other good qualities.

Malcolm. But I possess none of the good qualities necessary for a king, such as justice, truthfulness, moderation, steadiness, bounty, perseverance, mercy, humility, piety, patience, courage, fortitude—I do not have any of these virtues. On the other hand I possess in plenty every type of vice which I practise freely in a variety of ways. Nay, if I had pawer, I would banish all harmony from the earth, disturb the peace of the world and destroy all unity in society.

Macduff. O Scotland, you are an unfortunate country.

Malcolm. If such a man is fit to rule a country, say so. I have laid bare my character before you.

Macduff. Fit to rule! No, such a person is not even fit to live. O Sottish nation, you have been reduced to a miserable condition under a usurper who has established his power through murders.

When shalt thou see thy wholesome days again,
Since that the truest issue of thy throne
By his own *interdiction*[1] stands accursed,
And does *blaspheme his breed*[2]? Thy royal father
Was a most *sainted*[3] king: the queen that bore thee,
Oftener upon her knees than on her feet,
Died every day she lived. Fare thee well!
These evils thou repeat'st upon thyself
Have banish'd me from Scotland. O my breast,
Thy hope ends here!

Malcolm. Macduff, this noble passion,
Child of integrity, hath from my soul
Wiped the *scruples*,[4] reconciled my thoughts
To thy good truth and honour. Devilish Macbeth
By many of these trains hath sought to win me
into his power, and modest wisdom plucks me
From over-credulous haste: but God above
Deal between thee and me! for even now
I put myself to thy direction, and
Unspeak[5] mine own detraction, here *abjure*[6]
The taints and blames I laid upon myself,
For *strangers*[7] to my nature. I am yet
Unknown to love, I never was *forsworn*,[8]
Scarcely have *coveted*[9] what was mine own,
At no time broke my *faith*[10], would not betray
The devil to his fellow, and delight
No less in truth than life: my first false speaking
Was this *upon*[11] myself: what I am truly,
Is thine and my poor country's to command:
Whither indeed, before thy here-approach,

1. Condemnation.
2. Slander his own family.
3. Saintly.
4. Suspicions.
5. Take back.
6. Cast off
7. Unknown.
8. Told a lie.
9. Desired.
10. Promise.
11. Against

When will you see happy days again? Your rightful sovereign is proclaiming himself a villain and is slandering his own royal blood. [*To Malcolm*] Your royal father was a saintly king and the queen, who gave you birth, was more often seen praying on her knees than roaming about. She lived a life of daily mortification and self-denial. Farewell! The vices which you claim to possess are hated by me so intensely that I left Scotland with a hope of rooting them out. Now all hopes which I cherished in my heart are dashed to the ground.

Malcolm. Macduff, this noble patriotic outburst of yours springs direct from your honest sincerity and it has removed all dark suspicions of treachery from my mind. It confirmed my conviction in your truthfulness and honourable motives. Devilish Macbeth has tried to trap me into his power by many such devicas and, therefore, prudence restrains me from rashness in believing others. My God bear witness to the mutual dealings between you and me, for I am now immediately putting myself under your guidance. I withdraw all accusations which I have just made against myself and declare that the vices which I imputed to myself are foreign to my character. I have never so far tasted the fruit of love and have never committed perjury. I have never desired to possess even that which rightfully belongs to me. I have never violated my promise and would never betray even the devil to his companion. I love truth as much as I love my life. The first lie I have told in my life was this against myself. I place myself entirely at your disposal and at the service of my unfortunate country to which, just before you came here,

Old Siward, with ten thousand warlike men,
Already *at a point*[1], was setting forth.
Now we'll together ; and the chance of goodness
Be like our warranted quarrel ! Why are you silent ?

Macduff. Such welcome and unwelcome things at once
'Tis hard to reconcile.

Enter a Doctor

Malcolm. Well ; *more anon*[2]. Comes the king forth, I pray you ?

Doctor. Ay, sir ; there are a crew of *wretched souls*[3]
That *stay*[4] his cure : their malady *convinces*[5]
The great assay of art : but at his touch –
Such sanctity hath heaven given his hand—
They presently *amend*[6].

Malcolm. I thank you, doctor. [*Exit Doctor.*

Macd. What's the disease he means ?

Malcolm. 'Tis call'd the evil :
A most miraculous work in this good king ;
Which often, since my *here-remain*[7] in England,
I have seen him do. How he *solicits*[8] heaven,
Himself best knows : but strangely-visited people,
All swoln and ulcerous, pitiful to the eye,
The mere despair of surgery, he cures ;
Hanging a *golden stamp*[9] about their necks,
Put on with holy prayers : and 'tis spoken,
To the succeeding royalty he leaves
The healing benediction. With this strange virtue,
He hath a heavenly gift of prohecy,
And *sundry*[10] blessings hang about his throne,
That *speak him*[11] full of grace.

Macduff. See, who comes here ?

Malcolm. My countryman ; but yet I know him not.

1. Mustered.
2. Will speak more presently.
3. Suffering people.
4. Await.
5. Overpowers.
6. Improve
7. Stay.
8. Moves.
9. Gold coin.
10. Many other.
11. Proclaim him.

Old Siward was about to set forth with ten thousand fully armed soldiers. Now we will go together. May the prospect of our success be as bright as our cause is just. Why are you silent ?

Macduff. It is very difficult to reconcile happy and unhappy things together so soon.

Enter a Doctor

Malcolm. Well, we shall have further talk on this subject soon. Doctor, please tell me whether the king is coming out of the palace today.

Doctor. Yes, sir, there are many afflicted persons waiting to be healed by the king's touch. Their diseases have baffled the best efforts of expert physicians. God has given such holiness to the king's hand that the sick persons recover as soon as he touches them.

Malcolm. I thank you, Doctor.

[*Exit Doctor*

Macduff. What disease was the Doctor talking about ?

Malcolm. That disease is 'scrofula,' which is known as the king's evil. This pious king performs a wonderful miracle, which I have myself often witnessed during my stay here in England. He knows how to move heavenly powers through prayer, and the people suffering from strange diseases, as inflammatory swellings and ulcers, pitiful to look at and uncurable by surgeons, are cured by him. He hangs a gold coin round their necks all the time reciting certain holy prayers. It is said that he leaves this blessed gift of healing power to his successor. In addition to this wonderful faculty, he has been gifted with divine power of prophecy, and many other heavenly blessings which surround him and indicate that he enjoys special divine favours.

Macduff. Look, who comes here ?

Malcolm. He is my countryman, but I do not know him personally.

Enter Ross

Macduff. My ever-gentle cousin, welcome hither.

Malcolm. I know him now : good God, betimes remove
The means that makes us strangers !

Ross. Sir, amen.

Macduff. Stands Scotland where it did ?

Ross. Alas, poor country,
Almost afraid to know itself ! It cannot
Be call'd our mother, but our grave : where nothing,
But who knows nothing, is once seen to smile ;
Where sighs and groans and shrieks that rent the air
Are made, not mark'd ; where violent sorrow seems
A modern ecstasy[1] ; the dead man's *knell*[2]
Is there scarce ask'd for who ; and good men's lives
Expire before the flowers in their caps.
Dying or *ere*[3] they sicken.

Macduff. O, *relation*[4]
Too *nice*,[5] and yet too true !

Malcolm. What's the newest grief ?

Ross. That of an hour's age doth *hiss*[6] the speaker ;
Each minute *teems*[7] a new one.

Macduff. How does my wife ?

Ross. Why, well.

Macduff. And all my children ?

Ross. Well, too

Macduff. The tyrant has not *batter'd at*[8] their peace ?

Ross. No ; they were well at peace when I did leave 'em.

Macduff. Be not a *niggard*[9] of your speech : how goes't ?

Ross. When I came hither to *transport*[10] the *tidings*,[11]
Which I have *heavily*[12] borne, there ran a rumour

1. Common-place emotion.
2. Funeral bell.
3. Before.
4. Narration.
5. Elaborate.
6. Cause to be scorned.
7. Brings forth.
8. Attacked.
9. Sparing.
10. Convey.
11. News.
12. Sadly

Enter Ross.

Macduff. My ever-kind cousin, you are welcome.

Malcolm. I recognise this gentleman now. May God remove the obstacles which make us strangers among ourselves !

Ross. I say 'Amen' to your prayer, sir.

Macduff. Is the position in Scotland as gloomy as before ?

Ross. Alas, my poor country ! It is almost afraid to think of itself. It cannot be called our motherland—it is our graveyard. There is no one happy except those who are ignorant of everything. No man is seen to smile and the air is rent by sighs, groans and shrieks while there is no one to care for them. Sorrow is looked upon as something ordinary. Funeral bells ring so frequently that nobody pays heed to them. Good men die before even the flowers in their caps have withered away. They die without falling ill.

Macduff. O, this description is too minute and yet based on perfect truth.

Malcolm. What is the latest sad news ?

Ross. If the calamity which took place just an hour ago is described, it would become out of date and people will hiss and remark that it is a stale story. Every minute a new sad thing occurs.

Macduff. How is my wife keeping ?

Ross. Why, she is all right.

Macduff. How are all my children ?

Ross. They are also very well.

Macduff. The tyrant has not created troubles for them.

Ross. No, they were quite at peace when I left them.

Macduff. Do not give such brief replies. Tell me how things are going on.

Ross. When I came here to convey to you the sad news with a heavy heart, there was a rumour

Of many worthy fellows that were *out*[1];
Which was to my belief witness'd the rather,
For that I saw the tyrant's power a-foot:
Now is the time of help; your eye in Scotland
Would create soldiers, make our women fight,
To *doff*[2] their *dire distresses*[3].

Malcolm. Be't their comfort
We are coming thither: gracious England hath
Lent us good Siward and ten thousand men;
An older and a better soldier none
That Christendom *gives out*[4].

Ross. Would I could answer
This comfort with the like! But I have words
That would be bowl'd out in the desert air,
Where hearing should not *latch*[5] them.

Macduff. What concern they?
The general cause? or is it a *fee-grief*[6]
Due to some single breast?

Ross. No mind that's honest
But in it shares some woe; though the main part
Pertains to[7] you alone.

Macduff. If it be mine,
Keep it not from me, quickly let me *have it*[8].

Ross. Let not your ears *despise*[9] my tongue for ever,
Which shall *possess them with*[10] the *heaviest sound*[11]
That ever yet they heard.

Macduff. Hum! I guess at it.

Ross. Your castle is surprised; your wife and babes
Savagely slaughter'd[12]; to relate the manner,
Were, on the *quarry*[13] of these murder'd *deer*[14],

1. In revolt.
2. Put off.
3. Extreme misery.
4. Can produce.
5. Catch.
6. Individual.
7. Concerns.
8. Know it.
9. Hate.
10. Make them hear.
11. Saddest words.
12. Cruelly murdered.
13. Heap.
14. Harmless and helpless.

that many good men were out in an open armed rebellion against Macbeth, and this fact was confirmed when I saw Macbeth's forces on the march. This is a suitable time to help the country. Your bare glance would induce men to join your forces and to inspire even our women to fight so as to rid the country of the terrible miseries.

Malcolm. Let them draw comfort by the happy assurance that we are now going to march against the tyrant. The gracious king of England has agreed to lend us the services of noble Siward with ten thousand soldiers, and there is none in all Christendom more experienced and a better soldier than Siward,

Ross. I wish I could be in a position to give you as comforting news as you have given to me, but I have such news to convey to you as should only be spoken in a lonely desert so that no man might hear it.

Macduff. To whom does your news relate? Does it touch the general troubles of the people, or is it a particular grief concerning a single person?

Ross. All men of honourable disposition share this sorrow, though it principally affects you alone.

Macduff. If it concerns me, do not keep it secret from me. Let me know the matter at once.

Ross. You should not feel hatred towards me for ever, for I am going to break the saddest news that your ears have ever heard.

Macduff. Yes! I can guess what news you have to tell.

Ross. Your castle was stormed, your wife and children cruelly murdered. If I tell you the full details of the slaughter of the innocent souls it will be just

To add the death of you.
Malcolm. Merciful heaven !
What, man ! ne'er pull your hat upon your brows ;
Give sorrow words ; the grief that does not speak
Whispers the *o'er fraught*[1] heart and bid it break.
Macduff. My children too ?
Ross. Wife, children, servants all
That could be found.
Macduff. And I must be from thence !
My wife kill'd too ?
Ross. I have said.
Malcolm. Be comforted :
Let's make us medicines of our great revenge,
To cure this deadly grief.
Macduff. He has no children. All my pretty ones ?
Did you say all ! O *hell-kite* ![2] All ?
What, all my pretty *chickens*[3] and their *dam*[4]
At one *fell swoop*[5] ?
Malcolm. Dispute it like a man.
Macduff. I shall do so ;
But I must also feel it as a man :
I cannot but remember such things were,
That were more precious to me. Did heaven look on,
And would not take their part ? Sinful Macduff,
They were all struck for thee ! *naught*[6] that I am,
Not for their own *demerits*[7] but for mine,
Fell slaughter on their souls. Heaven rest them now !
Malcolm. Be this the *whetstone*[8] of your sword : let grief
Convert to anger ; blunt not the heart, enrage it.
Macduff. O, I could play the woman with mine eyes,
And *braggart*[9] with my tongue ! But, gentle heavens,

1. Overcharged.
2. Macbeth.
3. Children.
4. Mother.
5. Attack.
6. Worthless.
7. Faults
8. Stone for sharpening sword.
9. Boastful.

to kill you and add one more to those which have been already committed.

Malcolm. Merciful God! What, behave like man, you should not cover your face with your hat to hide your tears. Express your grief in words. The sorrow which is not expressed, unbalances the heart and breaks it.

Macduff. Have my children also been murdered?

Ross. Yes, your wife, children and servants, in short, all who could be found in your house were killed.

Macduff. And unfortunately I was away from them at such a tragic moment! Has my wife also been murdered?

Ross. I have already told you about her.

Malcolm. Take comfort. Let the thought of revenge bring relief to this terrible sorrow.

Macduff. He has no children. All my pretty ones have been killed? Did you say that all of them were slaughtered? O, hellish villain, you have slaughtered all? All my sweet children and their mother have been killed by one cruel stroke.

Malcolm. Face your sorrow like a man.

Macduff. I will do so, but must also feel it like a man. I cannot cast out of any mind the memory of my dear wife and children whom I loved most. Could God see all this deed being done without coming down to rescue them? Sinful Macduff, all of them have been killed due to your fault for leaving them in Scotland! They were slain not on account of their misdeeds but because I am a wretched creature. May God bestow peace upon their soul.

Malcolm. Let this grief sharpen your spirit of revenge. Let your sorrow be coverted into anger. Do not let your grief cool down your enthusiasm. It must inflame your heart.

Macduff. O I could weep like a woman, and shout in a boastful manner, but kind heaven,

Cut short all *intermission*;[1] front to front
Bring thou this *fiend*[2] of Scotland and myself;
Within my sword's length *set him*[3] if he *scape*[4]
Heaven forgive him too!

Malcolm. This *tune*[5] goes manly.
Come, go we to the king; our *power*[6] is ready;
Our lack is nothing but our leave: Macbeth
Is ripe for shaking, and the *powers above*[7]
Put on their instruments. Receive what cheer you may:
The night is long that never finds the day.
[*Exeunt.*

ACT V

SCENE I. *Dunsinane Ante-room in the castle*

Enter a Doctor of Physic *and a* Waiting-Gentlewoman.

Doctor. I have two nights watched with you, but can *perceive*[8] no truth in your report. When was it she last walked?

Gentlewoman. Since his majesty went into the *field*[9], I have seen her rise from her bed, throw her nightgown upon her, unlock her *closet*[10], take forth paper, fold it, write upon it, read it, afterwards seal it, and again return to bed; yet all this while in a most fast sleep.

Doctor. A great *perturbation in nature*,[11] to receive at once the benefit of sleep, and do the effects of watching!

1. Dealy.
2. Devil.
3. Put him.
4. Escape.
5. Way of speaking.
6. Army
7. Heaven
8. See.
9. Battle-field.
10. Paper-cabinet.
11. Disorder in functions of body.

cut short all delay and bring me face to face with Macbeth, the devil of Scotland. Then if he escapes my sword, let heaven forgive him for his criminal deeds.

Malcolm. Now you are speaking like a man. Come, let us proceed to the king. Our forces are ready to march. All that we have to do now is to take our leave of the king. Macbeth like a ripe fruit is ready to fall to the ground, and God has set instruments of revenge to work against him. Take what comfort you can because like the night sufferings also pass away. [*Exeunt.*

ACT V

SCENE I. *Dunsinane, Ante-room in the Castle.*

Enter a Physician *and a* Waiting-Gentlewoman.

Doctor. I have kept a constant watch over the queen for two nights, but have not seen anything to confirm your report. When did you see her last walking in her sleep ?

Gentlewoman. Since the king went to the battlefield, I have seen her rise from her bed, hurriedly dressing herself in her nightgown, unlock her cupboard, draw out paper, write on it, read it, seal it and then return to bed again; yet all that time she was fast asleep.

Doctor. It must be a case of great disturbance in the physical system, which leads to peacefully enjoy sleep and do what is done by a waking person.

In this *slumbery*[1] agitation, besides her walking and other *actual performances*,[2] what, at any time, have you heard her say?

Gentle. That, sir, which I will not report after her.

Doctor. You may to me; and 'tis must meet you should.

Gentlewoman. Neither to you nor any one; having no witness to confirm my speech. *Lo you*[3], here she comes!

Enter Lady MACBETH, *with a taper*[4]

This is her *very guise*[5]; and, upon my life, fast asleep.

Observe her; *stand close*[6].

Doctor. How came she by that light?

Gentlewoman. Why, it stood by her: she has light by her continually; 'tis her command.

Doctor. You see, her eyes are open.

Gentlewoman. Ay, but their sense is shut.

Doctor. What is it she does now? Look, how she rubs her hands.

Gentlewoman. It is an *accustomed*[7] action with her, to seem thus washing her hands: I have known her continue in this quarter of an hour.

Lady Macbeth. Yet, here's a spot.

Doctor. *Hark*[8]! she speaks: I will *set down*[9] *what comes from her*[10], to satisfy my remembrance the more strongly.

Lady Macbeth. Out, damned spot! out, I say!—One, two; why, then 'tis time to do't.—Hell is murky!—Fie, my lord, fie! a soldier, and *afeard*[11]? What need we fear who knows it, when none can call our power to account?—Yet who would have thought the old man to have had so much blood in him?

1. In sleep.
2. Physical acts.
3. Look
4. Light.
5. Exact custom.
6. Stand hidden.
7. Customary.
8. Listen.
9. Write down.
10. What she says.
11. Afraid.

In the course of this sleepy excitement, besides her walking and other physical activity, have you at any time heard her say something ?

Gentlewoman. Sir, I have heard her say things which I must not repeat before you.

Doctor. You may repeat her words to me, for it will be most helpful if you do so.

Gentlewoman. I shall not do so to anybody, including you, because there is no one to corroborate my statement.

Enter LADY MACBETH *with a taper.*

Look, she is coming this way ! This is her usual manner, and I am dead sure that she is fast asleep. Examine her from a hidden corner.

Doctor. How did she get that candle ?

Gentlewoman. Why, it lay by her bedside. She does always keep a light close to her. It is her command.

Doctor. You see, her eyes are wide open.

Gentlewoman. Yes, but she cannot see anything in her fit.

Doctor. What is she doing now ? See, how she rubs her hands.

Gentlewoman. It is a usual action with her to appear as if she was actually washing her hands. I have seen her do this for as long as fifteen minutes.

Lady Macbeth. There is yet a stain left here on my hand.

Doctor. Listen, she is saying something. I will note down in writing all that she says so that I may recall it exactly.

Lady Macbeth. O you cursed stain, clear away from my hand. Clear away I say ! The clock strikes one, two, oh, it is time to do the deed. Hell is dark. Shame, my husband shame ! You are a soldier and yet you are so terrified. Why should we fear any one coming to know it, when there is none to have courage to accuse us. Yet, who could think that the old man, Duncan, would bleed so much.

Doctor. Do you mark that ?

Lady Macbeth. The Thane of Fife had a wife : where is she now ?—What, will these hands ne'er be clean ?—No more o' that my lord, no more o' that : you *mar*[1] all with this starting.

Doctor. Go to, go to ; you have known what you should not.

Gentlewoman. She has spoke what she should not, I ame sure of that : heaven knows what she has known.

Lady Macbeth. Here's the smell of the blood still : all the *perfumes*[2] of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand. Oh, oh, oh !

Doctor. What a sigh is there ! The heart is *sorely charged*[3]

Gentlewoman. I would not have such a heart in my bosom for the dignity of the whole body.

Doctor. Well, well, well,—

Gentlewoman. *Pray God it be,*[4] sir.

Doctor. This disease is beyond my practice : yet I have known those which have walked in their sleep who have died holily in their beds.

Lady Macbeth. Wash your hands, put on your night-gown ; look not so pale :—I tell you yet again, Banquo's buried ; he cannot come out, on's grave.

Doctor Even so !

Lady Macbeth. To bed, to bed ; there's knocking at the gate : come, come, come, give me your hand : what's done cannot be undone : to bed, to bed, to bed. [*Exit.*

Doctor. Will she go now to bed ?

Gentlewoman. *Directly.*[5]

Doctor. *Foul whisperings*[6] are abroad : unnatural deeds.

1. Spoil.
2. Sweet scent.
3. Heavily burdened with sorrow.
4. May she become well.
5. Immediately.
6. Bad rumours.

Doctor. Do you hear all that ?

Lady Macbeth. Macduff, the Thane of Fife, had a wife. Where is she now ? What, will my hands be never clean ? No more of that, my husband, no more of that : you spoil everything by your fits of nervousness.

Doctor. Come now, you have heard something which you should not have heard.

Gentlewoman. I am sure, she has said things which she ought not to have said. Only God knows what secrets are known to her.

Lady Macbeth. There is yet the smell of blood in my hand. All the perfumes of Arabia are not enough to sweeten my little hands by removing the smell of blood from them. Oh, oh, oh !

Doctor. What a deep sigh is that ! Her heart seems to be heavily burdened with sorrow.

Gentlewoman. I would not like to have such a heart in my breast even if queenly dignity now enjoyed by her body were to accompany it.

Doctor. Well, well, well,—

Gentlewoman. I pray to God to make her well.

Doctor. This type of illness lies beyond the field of my practice. Yet I know some people who walked in their sleep and in spite of that have died a pious and peaceful death in their beds.

Lady Macbeth. Wash your hands clean, my husband, and put on your dressing-gown. Do not look so pale. I tell you once again that Banquo is dead and buried. He cannot come out of his grave.

Doctor. Have things gone so far ?

Lady Macbeth. Let us go to bed quickly. Somebody is knocking at the castle-gate. Come on, make haste, let me hold your hand. What is done cannot now be undone. Come, let us retire to bed at once. [*Exit.*

Doctor. Will she now go to bed ?

Gentlewoman. Yes, at once.

Doctor. Wicked rumours of ugly crimes are

Do breed unnatural troubles : infected minds
To their deaf pillows will discharge their secrets :
More needs she the *divine*[1] than the physician.
God, God forgive us all ! Look after her ;
Remove from her the means of all annoyance,
And *still keep eyes upon her*[2] : so, good night :
My mind she has *mated*[3], and amazed my sight :
I think, but dare not speak.

Gentlewoman. Good night, good doctor.
[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II *The country near Dunsinane*

Enter, with drum and colours, MENTEITH, CAITHNESS, ANGUS, LENNOX, *and* Soldiers.

Menteith. The English *power*[4] is near, led on by Malcolm,
His uncle Siward and the good Macduff :
Revenges burn in them ; for their dear causes
Would to the bleeding and the grim alarm
Excite the *mortified*[5] man.

Angus. Near Birnam wood
Shall we *well*[6] meet them ; that way are they coming.

Caithness. Who knows if Donalbain be with his brother ?

Lennox. *For certain*[7], sir, he is not : I have a *file*[8]
Of all the *gentry*[9] : there is Siward's son,
And many *unrough*[10] youths that even now
Protest their first of manhood.

Menteith. What does the tyrant ?

Caithness. Great Dunsinane he strongly fortifies :
Some say he's mad ; others, that lesser hate him,

1. Clergyman.
2. Always watch her.
3. Bewildered.
4. Army
5. Dead man.
6. Certainly.
7. Definitely.
8. List.
9. Nobility.
10. Unbearded.

in circulation among people. Unnatural acts lead to unnatural types of diseases. Guilty minds disclose their secrets in sleep to their deaf pillows. She needs spiritual cure under a priest than medical treatment under a doctor. May God forgive us all. Take proper care of her. Keep away from her all things by which she may harm herself. Keep a constant eye on her. So, now, good night. She has confused my mind and bewildered my sight. I can guess everything through her references but cannot dare to discuss anything.

Gentlewoman. Good night to you, noble Doctor.

[*Exeunt*

SCENE II. *The country near Dunsinane.*

Enter, with drum and colours, MENTEITH, CAITHNESS, ANGUS, LENNOX, *and* soldiers.

Menteith. The English army, commanded by Malcolm, his uncle Siward and noble Macduff, has drawn quite near. They are inflamed by feelings of revenge and the cause which is inspiring them is such that it would stir up even a dead man to take up arms and launch bloodshed in the battlefield.

Angus. We are sure to meet them near Birnam wood, for they are advancing from that way.

Caithness. Has somebody heard that Donalbain is also accompanying his brother Malcolm ?

Lennox. He is certainly not accompanying him, sir. I have got a list of all nobles who are marching under Malcolm. There is Siward's son and also many beardless youths who are giving first proof of their manhood.

Ment. What is Macbeth, the tyrant, doing ?

Caithness. He is strongly fortifying the great castle of Dunsinane. Opinions differ on these defensive measures—some people say that Macbeth has gone mad, while others who hate him

Do call it valiant fury : but, for certain,
He cannot buckle his *distemper'd*[1] cause
Within the belt of rule.

Angus. Now does he feel
His secret murders sticking on his hands ;
Now minutely revolts *upbraid*[2] his *faith-breach*[3],
Those he commands move only in command,
Nothing in love: now does he feel his title
Hang loose about him, like a giant's robe
Upon a dwarfish thief.

Menteith. Who then shall blame
His *pestere'd*[4] senses to recoil and start
When all *that is within him*[5] does condemn
Itself for being there ?

Caithness. Well, march we on
To give obedience where 'tis truly owed.
Meet we the medicine of the sickly weal,
And with him pour we in our country's purge
Each *drop*[6] of us.

Lennox. Or so much as it needs.
To *dew*[7] the sovereign flower and drown the weeds.
Make we our march towards Birnam.

[*Exeunt, marching.*

SECNE III. *Dunsinane. A room in the castle.*

Enter MACBETH, Doctor, *and* Attendants.

Macbeth. Bring me no more reports ; let them fly all :
Till Birnam wood *remove*[8] to Dunsinane,
I cannot *taint*[9] with fear. What's the boy Malcolm?
Was he not born of woman ? The spirts that know
All mortal consequences have *pronounced me*[10] thus,

1. Disordered.
2. Reproach.
3. Treachery.
4. Troubled.
5. His soul.
6. Drop of blood.
7. Refresh.
8. Move.
9. Be touched.
10. Told me.

to a lesser degree hold that he is a man of desperate courage. But one thing is certain that he has not been able to keep his disorganised party under his control.

Angus. Now he realises the burden of secret murders weighing heavily on his conscience. Fresh revolts break out every minute to reproach him for his treachery to Duncan. People under his command obey him out of fear and not out of love. Now he feels his title to be as unfit for him as a giant's robe hangs loose on the body of a small sized thief.

Menteith. No one shall in such a case blame his harassed senses which are dominated by fear and seized with alarm, when his own conscience condemns itself for being a part of his 'self.'

Caithness. All right, let us march on to offer allegiance to Malcolm to whom it is due. Let us go to meet him, who is coming to cure the nation's sickness and let us shed every drop of our blood to rid our country of the disease of tyranny.

Lennox. Or as much blood as is required to help blossoming of the flower of true sovereignty, and the destruction of the weeds of tyranny. Let us now march towards Birnam.

Scene III. Dunsinane, a room in the castle.

Enter MACBETH, Doctor *and* Attendants.

Macbeth. Do not bring to me any more reports of desertions. Let all of them fly away to Malcolm. Fear will not touch me till Birnam wood moves itself to come to Dunsinane. What is there in the boy Malcolm of which I should be afraid? Was he not born of woman? The Supernatural Apparitions who know all that may happen to mortals have prophesied about my future to this effect:

"Fear not, Macbeth; no man that's born of woman.
Shall e'er have power upon thee." Then fly, false thanes,
And *mingle*[1] with the English *epicures*[2]:
The mind I sway by and the heart I bear
Shall never *sag*[3] with nor shake with fear.

Enter a Servant

The devil damn thee black, thou cream-faced *loon*![4]
Where *gott'st*[5] that that *goose look*[6]?

Serv. There is ten thousand—

Macbeth. Geese, villain?

Servant. Soldiers, sir.

Macbeth. Go prick thy face, and over-red thy fear,
Thou *lily-liver'd*[7] boy. What soldiers, *patch*[8]?
Death of thy soul! those *linen*[9] cheeks of thine
Are counsellors to fear. What soldiers, *whey-face*?[10]

Servant. The English *force*,[11] so please you.

Macbeth. Take thy face hence. [*Exit Servant.*
Seyton!—I am sick at heart,
When I behold—Seyton, I say!—This *push*[12]
Will cheer me ever, or disseat me now.
I have lived long enough: my way of life
Is *fall'n into*[13] the *sear*,[14] the yellow leaf;
And that which should accompany old age,
As honour, love, obedience, troops of friends,
I must not look to have; but, in their stead,
Curses, not loud but deep, mouth-honour, breath,

1. Mix.
2. Pleasure loving.
3. Droop.
4. Stupid fellow.
5. Got.
6. Cowardly.
7. Cowardly.
8. Fool.
9. White
10. Pale-faced.
11. Army.
12. Attack
13. Arrived.
14. Dry.

"Fear not, Macbeth, no man born of woman can defeat you." So fly away false thanes and associate with the luxurious English invaders. My determination and courage shall never droop with doubt or shake with fear.

Enter a Servant

May the devil damn you till your face is black, you pale-faced coward ! where did you get that frightened look ?

Servant. There are then thousand—

Macbeth. You rascal, there are ten thousand geese only.

Servant. No, sir, they are soldiers.

Macbeth. Go and scratch your face to make it look red, you cowardly knave. What soldiers are you talking about, fool ? May you be damned ! Your white cheeks will infect others with fear. What soldiers are they, you pale-faced fellow ?

Servant. They are the English soldiers, your majesty.

Macbeth. Take your pale face away from my presence. [*Exit servant.*

Seyton ! I feel sorely oppressed at heart, when I see—Seyton, I say—This attack will either securely establish me on the throne or dethrone me. I have lived for sufficiently a long time, and the course of my life has now become unattractive. It is like a yellow leaf. I must not seek to gain honour, affection, obedience, sincere friends, which are required in old age. Instead of them I must expect to have curses whict are not openly hurled upon me due to fear. They are settled deep in hearts. I get lip reverence, mere words,

Which the poor heart would fain deny, and dare not.
Seyton! *Enter* SEYTON

Seyton. What is your gracious pleasure?
Macbeth. What news more?
Seyton. All is confirm'd, my lord, which was reported.
Macbeth. I'll fight, till from my bones my flesh be *hack'd*[1].
Give me my armour.
Seyton. 'Tis not needed yet.
Macbeth. I'll put it on.
Send out *moe*[2] horses, *skirr*[3] the country round;
Hang those that talk of fear. Give me mine armour.
How does your patient, doctor?
Doctor. Not so *sick*[4], my lord,
As she is troubled with *thick-coming fancies*[5]
That keep her from her rest.
Macbeth. Cure her of that:
Canst thou not *minister*[6] to a mind diseased,
Pluck from the memory a *rooted*[7] sorrow,
Raze out[8] the *written*[9] troubles of the brain,
And with some sweet *oblivious*[10] *antidote*[11]
Cleanse the *stuff'd bosom*[12] of that *perilous stuff*[13]
Which weighs upon the heart?
Doctor. Therein the patient
Must minister to himself.
Macbeth. Throw *physic*[14] to the dogs, I'll none of it.
Come, put mine armour on; give me my staff:
Seyton, send out. Doctor, the thanes fly from me.
Come sir, *dispatch*[15]. If thou couldst, doctor, find
My land's disease,

1. Cut off.
2. More.
3. Scour.
4. Physical sickness
5. Numerous.
6. Treat.
7. Deep rooted.
8. Remove.
9. Firmly set on brain.
10. Forgetfulness.
11. Medicine which counteracts poison.
12. Overburdened.
13. Dangerous matter.
14. Medicine.
15. Make haste.

which the miserable flatterers would like to refuse but cannot dare to do so. Seyton !

Enter Seyton

Seyton. What is your majesty's command ?

Macbeth. Have you received any fresh news ?

Seyton. What was already reported has since been confirmed.

Macbeth. I have resolved to fight till my flesh is cut off into pieces and is removed from my bones. Bring me my armour.

Seyton. The moment when you may require to put on your armour has not yet come.

Macbeth. I insist to put it on. Send out more horsemen. Let them scour the whole countryside and hang those people who spread alarm. Give me my armour. Doctor, how is your patient getting along ?

Doctor. Your majesty, she is not so physically ill as she is troubled by whims which crowd her mind and do not let her rest.

Macbeth. Then cure her of that disease. Have you got no medicine to heal the mind which has lost its balance and drive out deep-rooted sorrow from the memory, or purge the brain of the deep-rooted mental troubles ? Cannot you with some sweet medicine induce forgetfulness and clean the heart of its terrible grief which depresses it ?

Doctor. That trouble is of such a nature that it may be cured only through the efforts of the patient himself.

Macbeth. Then throw away your medicines to dogs. I will have none of them. [*To servant.*] Come, help me to put on my armour. Give me my staff. Seyton, send out messengers. Doctor, the thanes are deserting me. Come quickly sir, make haste. Doctor, if you could medically examine my country diagnose her malady.

And purge it to a sound and *pristine*[1] health,
I would *applaud*[2] thee to the very echo,
That should applaud again.—Pull't off, I say.—
What rhubarb, senna, or what purgative drug,
Would scour these English hence? Hear'st thou
of them?

Doctor. Ay, my good lord; your royal preparation
Makes us hear something.

Macbeth. Bring it after me.
I will not be afraid of death and *bane*,[3]
Till Birnam forest come to Dunsinane.

[*Exeunt all except Doctor.*

Doctor. Were I from Dunsinane away and clear,
Profit again should hardly draw me here. [*Exit.*

SCENE IV. *Country near Dunsinane; a wood in view.*

Enter, with drum and colours, MALCOLM, *old* SIWARD *and young* SIWARD, MACDUFF, MENTEITH, CAITHNESS, ANGUS, LENNOX, ROSS, *and* Soldiers, *marching.*

Malcolm. Cousins, I hope the days are near at hand
That chambers will be safe.

Menteith. We doubt it nothing.

Siward. What wood is this before us?

Menteith. The wood of Birnam

Malcolm. Let every soldier hew him down a *bough*[4]
And *bear't*[5] before him: thereby shall we *shadow*[6]
The numbers of our *host*[7] and make *discovery*[8]
Err in report of us.

Soldiers. It shall be done.

1. Ancient
2. Admire.
3. Destruction.
4. Branch.
5. Carry it.
6. Conceal.
7. Army.
8. Discoverers.

and by clearing away its disease, restore to her sound health, peace and security, I will praise your skill to such an extent that echoes of my applause will resound throughout the country. [*Addressing servant*] Pull of the armour, I say. [*Addressing doctor*] Can you suggest any purgative medicine, *e.g.*, rhubarb, senna, etc., that would drive the English from the country of Scotland ? Have you heard about them ?

Doctor. Yes, your majesty, your military preparations indicate something of that sort.

Macbeth. [*Addressing servant*] Bring that part of armour after me. I have no cause to fear death and destruction till Birnam Wood travels from its place to Dunsinane.

[*Exeunt all except Doctor.*

Doctor [*Addressing himself*] If I could once get away from Dunsinane, I will not come back to it even if I am tempted by handsome profit.

[*Exit.*

SCENE IV. *Country near Dunsinane : a wood in view.*

Enter with drum and colours, old SIWARD *and young* SIWARD, MACDUFF, MENTEITH, CAITHNESS, ANGUS, LENNOX, ROSS *and* soldiers, *marching*.

Malcolm. Cousins, I hope that the time has now drawn quite near when peace and security will reign in our houses.

Menteith. There is no doubt about it.

Siward. What forest is this before us ?

Menteith. It is called Birnam Wood.

Malcolm. Let every soldier cut down a branch from the trees and carry it before him so that we may be able to conceal the strength of our army from the enemy and make the scouts give wrong report about the numerical strength of our army.

Soldiers. We shall instantly carry out your command.

Siward. We learn no other but the confident tyrant
Keeps still in Dunsinane, and will endure
Our setting down before't

Malcolm. 'Tis his main hope
For where there is advantage to be given,
Both *more and less*[1] have given him the revolt;
And none serve with him but constrained things,
Whose hearts are absent too.

Macduff Let our *just censures*[2]
And then true event, and put we on
Industrious soldiership[3]

Siward. The time approaches
That will with *due*[4] decision make us know
What we shall say we *have*,[5] and what we owe[6]
Thoughts speculative[7] their unsure hopes *relate*,[8]
But certain issue *strokes*[9] must *arbitrate* :[10]
Towards which advance the war.

[*Exeunt, Marching.*

SCENE V. *Dunsinane. Within the castle.*

Enter with drum and colours, MACBETH, SEYTON, *and* soldiers.

Macbeth. Hang out our banners on the outward walls ;
The cry is still, "They come" : our castle's strength
Will laugh a siege to scorn : here let them *lie*[11]

1. Great and small.
2. Just judgments
3. Military preparations.
4. Proper.
5 Gained.
6. Lost,
7. Guesses.
8. Express.
9. Fightings.
10. Decide
11. Lie encamped.

Siward. We have received no more than this information that the confident tyrant has kept himself shut in Dunsinane and will suffer to lay siege to the castle.

Malcolm. The castle of Dunsinane is the only spot to which Macbeth pins his hope because whenever an opportunity has posed itself, both high and low people have deserted him and those that are there in his service, serve him under force and not out of voluntary impulse.

Macduff. Let us not be hasty but reserve our judgment till the final issue of battle reveals the truth. Let us in the meanwhile make solid preparations for the battle.

Siward. The moment is drawing near when the result of the fight will definitely show what we have won and what we have lost. Mere conjectures lead us to ellusive hopes. The actual fighting will decide the result of the struggle. Let our army march to settle the issue once for all.

[*Exeunt marching.*

SCENE V. *Dunsinane. Within the castle.*

Enter, with drum and colours, MACBETH, SEYTON *and* soldiers.

Macbeth. Furl out our flags on the outer walls of the castle. Reports are pouring in about the advance of the enemy forces. Our castle is strong enough to scornfully defy the besiegers. Let the enemy lie here.

Till famine and the *ague*[1] eat them up :
Were they not *forced*[2] with those that should be ours,
We might have met them *dareful*,[3] *beard to beard*,
And beat them backward home.

[*A cry of women within.*

What is that noise ?

Seyton. It is the cry of women, my good lord.
Exit.

Macbeth. I have almost forgot the *taste* [5] of fears :
The time has been, my senses would have cool'd
To hear a night-shriek ; and my *fell of hair*[6]
Would at *dismal treatise*[7] rouse and stir
As life were in't. I have suppd'd full with horrors;
Direness[8] familiar to my slaughterous thoughts,
Cannot once start me.

Re-*enter* SEYTON

Wherefore[9] was that cry ?

Seyton. The queen, my lord, is dead.

Macbeth. She should have died hereafter ;
There would have been a time for such a word.
Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow,[10]
Creeps in[11] this *petty pace*[12] from day to day,
To the last syllable of recorded time ;
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
They way to *dusty death*.[13] Out, out, brief candle !
Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player
That *struts* [14] and *frets*[15] his hour upon the stage,
And then is heard no more : it is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing.

1. Fever
2. Rein-forced.
3. Boldly.
4. Face to face.
5. Feeling.
6. All the hair on head.
7. Horrible story.
8. Horror
9. Why.
10. Each succeeding day.
11. Moves slowly.
12. Slow speed.
13. To the grave
14 Walks pompously.
15. Speaks and acts passionately.

till they are destroyed by starvation and fever. If they had not been assisted by the Scotch deserters we would have faced them boldly and after routing them in the battlefield, would have driven them back to their country.

[*A cry of women within*]

What is that noise ?

Seyton. It is cry of women, your majesty. [*Exit*

Macbeth. I have almost forgotten even the taste of fear. There was a time in the past when my heart would have been chilled on hearing a cry at night, and my hair would have stood on end at the dreadful story, as if it were alive. I have had plenty of horrors and I have become now so familiar with murderous thoughts that nothing can unnerve me.

Re-enter SEYTON

What was the cause of that cry ?

Seyton. The queen is dead, Your Majesty.

Macbeth. If she had died later, it would have been better, because the time would have been ripe for such a piece of news. Each day follows another and so the time moves on drearily with dull regularity till the last moment of earthly time comes and thus all our yesterdays lead the foolish men along the dusty path moving to the grave. Let the flame of life be put out, for life is only a hollow unreality, no more than a shadow and a man is like a third rate actor who walks on the stage in a pompous manner for a brief hour or two and is then heard no more. The human life is, after all, a story told by an idiot, full of loud noises and fierce boasts, having no real sense.

Enter a Messenger

Thou comest to use thy tongue ; thy story quickly
Messenger. Gracious my lord,
I should report that which I say I saw,
But know not how to do it.
Macbeth. Well, say, sir
Messenger. As I did stand my watch upon the hill.
I look'd toward Birnam, and *anon*,[1] methought
The wood began to move.
Macbeth. Liar and slave !
Messenger. Let me endure your wrath, if't be not so :
Within this three mile may you see it coming ;
I say, a moving grove.
Macbeth. If thou speak'st false,
Upon the next tree shalt thou hang alive,
Till famine *cling*[2] thee; if thy speech be *sooth*[3],
I care not if thou dost for me as much.
I pull in resolution, and begin
To doubt the *equivocation*[4] of the fiend,
That lies like truth : "Fear not till Brinam wood
Do come to Dunsinane;" and now a wood
Comes toward Dunsinane. Arm, arm, and out !
If this which he *avouches*[5] *does appear*,[6]
There is nor flying hence nor *tarrying*[7] here.
I *gin*[8] to be *a-weary*[9] of the sun,
And wish the estate o' the world were now undone
Ring the alarum-bell ! Blow, wind ! come, *wrack* ![10]
At last we'll die with *harness*[11] on our back.
[*Exeunt*

1. Presently.
2. Wither
3. True.
4. Avoidance of truth.
5. Declares
6. Actually visible.
7. Waiting.
8. Begin.
9. Weary.
10. Storm.
11. Armour.

Enter a Messenger

You have something to tell me—speak out your story quickly.

Messenger. My gracious lord, I must report what I saw, but I do not know how to put it before you.

Macbeth. Well, sir, speak out what you have to say.

Messenger. As I stood upon the hill on my duty as a guard, I looked towards Birnam, and suddenly it seemed to me as if the wood was in motion.

Macbeth. You are a liar, scoundrel !

Messenger. I am ready to suffer any punishment, if my report proves to be false. I claim that this moving wood is advancing within three miles of this place and that you may yourself see it in motion.

Macbeth. If what you have told is a lie, I will get you hanged alive on the first tree I come across and will keep you there till you die of hunger. But if your report is true, I do not care even if you hang me in the same manner. I am losing my strong confidence and have begun to doubt the ambiguous utterances of the devil who told lies which may be mistaken for truth. The Apparition had said : "Do not fear till Birnam Wood reaches Dunsinane," and now a wood is actually advancing towards Dunsinane. Take up arms at once and march out from the castle to resist the enemy ! If, as this messenger has declared, the moving wood is actually visible, then it is immaterial whether we fly away from this castle or keep ourselves within it. I have begun to feel tired of life and wish that all order and system in the world were come to an end. Ring the alarm bell ! Let the storm come and destroy the world ! We will face death at least fighting like warriors clad in armour. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE VI. *Dunsinane. Before the castle*

Enter, with drum and colours, MALCOLM, *old* SIWARD, MACDUFF, *&c., and their* Army, *with boughs.*

Mal. Now near enough; your *leavy screens*[1] throw down,
And show *like those you are*[2]. You, worthy *uncle*[3]
Shall, with my cousin, your right-noble son,
Lead our first *battle*[4]: worthy Macduff and we
Shall take upon's what else remains to do,
According to our *order*[5].

Siward. Fare you well.
Do[6] we but find the tyrant's power to-night,
Let us be beaten, if we cannot fight.

Macduff. Make all our trumpets speak; give them all breath,
Those *clamorous*[7] *harbingers*[8] of blood and death.
[*Exeunt.*

SCENE VII. *Another part of the field.*

Alarums. Enter MACBETH

Macbeth. They have tied me to a stake; cannot fly,
But, bear like, I must fight the course. What's he
That was not born of woman? Such a one
Am I to fear, or none.

Enter young SIWARD

Yo. Siw. What is thy name?

Macbeth. Thou'lt be afraid to hear it.

Yo. Siw. No; though thou call'st thyself a *hotter name*[9]
Than any is in hell.

1. Leafy screens.
2. As you are.
3. Siward.
4. Battalion.
5. Plan of battle.
6. If.
7. Noisy.
8. Messengers.
9. More wicked name.

SCENE VI. *Dunsinane. Before the castle*

Enter, with drum and colours, MALCOLM, *old* SIWARD, MACDUFF, etc., *and their* army *with boughs.*

Malcolm. Now, we have drawn quite near to Dunsinane Castle. Throw down the leafy screens from your hands and show yourself in actual numerical strength. My worthy uncle, you and your brave son, my cousin, will lead the first attacking battalion of our army. Noble Macduff and myself will command the rest of the army and everything else according to our plan of battle.

Siward. Farewell. If we meet the army of Macbeth tonight, we must give him a good fight and win victory, or else we deserve defeat.

Macduff. Let all our trumpets be blown. Let all the instruments proclaim bloodshed and destruction. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE VII. *Another part of the field.*

Alarms. Enter MACBETH.

Macbeth. The enemy have driven me to bay. Like a bear tied to a pole I cannot escape but must fight as a tied bear fights the dogs let loose on it. Who can that person be, who is not born of woman ? I fear only such a man and no one else at all.

Enter young SIWARD

YoungSiward. What is your name ?

Macbeth. You will be afraid to hear it.

Young Siward. No, even if your name were more frightful than that of a hellish devil.

Macbeth. My name's Macbeth.

Yo. Siw. The devil himself could not pronounce a title
More hateful to mine ear.

Macbeth. No, nor more fearful.

Yo. Siw. Thou liest, *abhorred*[1] tyrant; with my sword.
I'll prove the lie thou speaks't.

[*They fight and Young Siward is slain.*

Macbeth. Thou *wast*[2] born of woman.
But swords I smile at, weapons laugh to scorn,
Brandish'd by man that's of a woman born [*Exit.*

Alarums. Enter MACDUFF.

Macduff. That way the noise is. Tyrant, show thy face!
If thou be'st slain and with no stroke of mine,
My wife and children's ghosts will haunt me still.
I cannot strike at wretched *kerns*[3], whose arms
Are hired to bear their *staves*[4]: either thou, Macbeth,
Or else my sword, with an unbatter'd edge,
I sheath again *undeeded*[5]. There thou shouldst be;
By this great *clatter*,[6] one of greatest note
Seems *bruited*[7]: let me find him, fortune!
And more I beg not. [*Exit. Alarums.*

Enter MALCOLM *and old* SIWARD

Siward. This way, my lord; the castle's gently *render'd*[8]:
The tyrant's people on both sides do fight;
The noble thanes do bravely in the war;
The day almost *itself professes*[9] yours,
And little is to do.

Malcolm. We have met with foes
That strike beside us.

Siward. Enter, sir, the castle.

[*Exeunt. Alarums.*

1. Hated.
2. Was
3. Foot soldiers.
4. Lances.
5. Without using it
6. Noise.
7. Pointed out.
8. Surrendered.
9. Declares itself.

Macbeth. My name's Macbeth.

Young Siward. Even the devil could not utter a name more hateful to my ear.

Macbeth. No, nor a name more fearful to you.

Young Siward. You lie hateful tyrant. I will prove with my sword that you are lying.

[*They fight and Young Siward is slain.*

Macbeth. So you were born of woman. I smile at swords and laugh at weapons wielded by any man born of woman. [*Exit.*

Alarums. Enter MACDUFF

Macduff. The noise is coming from this side. Where is Macbeth, the tyrant—let you show your face! If you are slain by any one else, and not by me then the spirits of my wife and children will cry for revenge and will constantly haunt me. I do not like to fight against the hired mercenaries who hold lances for pecuniary considerations. I will either kill you, Macbeth, with the stroke of this sword in my hand, or I will sheathe it without using it at all in the battle-field. This great uproar indicates that you or some high personage must be somewhere near. May I have good fortune to find Macbeth! O, fortune, I do not ask any favour of you.

[*Exit. Alarums.*

Enter MALCOLM *and Old* SIWARD

Siward. Come this way, my lord, because the castle has surrendered without offering resistance. The soldiers of Macbeth are fighting on both sides without discrimination. Our noble thanes are fighting bravely in the struggle. You have practically won the victory and little is now left for us to do.

Malcolm. We have come across men who were fighting on the enemy side but are now on ours.

Siward. Take possession of the castle, sir.

[*Exeunt Alarums.*

caught

SCENE VIII *Another part of the field*

Enter MACBETH

Macbeth. Why should I play the Roman fool and die,
On mine own sword? Whiles I see *lives*,[1] the *gashes*[2]
Do better upon them.

Enter MACDUFF

Macduff. Turn, hell-hound, turn!

Macbeth. *Of all men else*[3] I have avoided thee:
But get thee back; my soul is too much *charged*[4]
With blood of *thine*[5] already.

Macduff. I have no words:
My voice is in my sword; thou bloodier vallain
Than terms can *give thee out*[6]! [*They fight.*

Macbeth. Thou losest labour:
As easy mayst thou the *intrenchant*[7] air
With thy keen sword impress, as make me bleed:
Let fall thy blade on *vulnerable crests*[8];
I bear a charmed life, which must not yield
To one of woman born.

Macduff. Despair thy charm;
And let the angel whom thou still hast served
Tell thee, Macduff was from his mother's womb
Untimely ripp'd[9].

Macbeth. *Accursed*[10] be that tongue that tells me so,
For it hath *cow'd*[11] my *better part of men*[12]!

1. Living beings.
2. Wounds
3. Of all other man.
4. Burdened.
5. Your family.
6. Express you.
7. That cannot be cut.
8. Heads that cannot be attacked
9. Torn out before full period of gastation.
10. Cursed
11. Terrorized.
12. Courage.

SCENE VIII. *Another part of the field*

Enter MACBETH

Macbeth. Why should I act like the foolish Roman General who had committed suicide? So long as I see enemies round me, I would prefer to inflict wounds on them instead of on my own body.

Enter MACDUFF

Macduff. Turn round and face me, you, hell-dog!

Macbeth. Of all men I have avoided meeting you up to this moment. But go away. My soul is already feeling the heavy weight of guilt at shedding the blood of your family.

Macduff. I have not come here to argue with you. My sword will speak for me. You are a bloody villain more than words can describe. [*They fight.*

Macbeth. You are wasting your energy in fighting against me. It is easier for you to cut the air with your sword than inflict a wound on me. Use your sword against some other persons whose heads are not vulnerable. I am protected by a charm and I will not meet death at the hands of a man born of woman.

Macduff. Put no faith in that charm, and let that evil genius, whom you have served so long, tell you that Macduff was not born of woman in the strict sense because he was prematurely torn out of his mother's womb by surgical operation before the proper time.

Macbeth. Let that tongue be cursed which tells me this, because it has collapsed the courage, which has been my chief quality;

And be these *juggling fiends*[1] no more believed,
That *palter*[2] with us in a *double sense*[3];
That keep the word of promise to our ear,
And break it to our hope ! I'll not fight with thee.

Macduff. Then *yield thee*[4], coward,
And live to be the show and gaze o' the time :
We'll have thee, as our rarer monsters are,
Painted upon a pole, and underwrit,
"Here may you see the tyrant."

Macbeth. I will not yield,
To kiss the ground before young Malcolm's feet,
And to be *baited*[5] with the *rabble's curse*[6].
Though Birnam wood be come to Dunsinane,
And thou opposed, being of no woman born,
Yet I will try the last. Before my body
I throw my warlike shield : lay on, Macduff ;
And damn'd be him that first cries "Hold, enough!"

[*Exeunt, fighting Alarums.*

Retreat. Flourish. Enter, with drum and colours, MALCOLM, *old* SIWARD, ROSS, LENNOX, ANGUS, CAITHNESS, MENTEITH, *and* Soldiers.

Malcolm. I would the friends we miss were safe arrived.

Siward. Some must *go off*[7]: and yet, by these I see,
So great a day as this is cheaply bought.

Malcolm. Macduff is missing, and your noble son.

Ross. Your son, my lord, has paid a soldier's debt :
He only lived but till he was a man ;
The which no sooner had his *prowess confirm'd*[8]

1. Wicked deceivers.
2. To use words in double meaning.
4. Surrender yourself.
5. Tormented.
6. Curse of crowd.
7. Be killed.
8. Physical strength proved.

and let no one believe the words of those evil spirits who cheat us by words having a double sense. They keep their promise in the literal sense and do not fulfil the implied meaning to which our hopes are pinned. I shall not fight with you.

Macduff. Then surrender yourself, coward, so that we may exhibit you as a human monster to the people. We will get your shape painted and show you as our rare monster, hang your painting on a pole and write this caption below it : "Here you see the tyrant."

Macbeth. I shall not surrender myself to lie prostrate on the ground before that boy Malcolm, and to be greeted with the curses of the crowd of common people. Although Birnam Wood has come to Dunsinane and though you, who are not born of woman, are opposing me, yet I shall fight to the last. I hold my strong warrior's shield before me to cover my body. Strike as hard as you can, Macduff, and let he be cursed who first cries "Stop, that is enough!"

[*Exeunt fighting, Alarums.*

Retreat Flourish. Enter, with drum and colours, MALCOLM, *Old* SIWARD, ROSS, LENNOX, ANGUS, CAITHNESS, MENTEITH, *and* Soldiers.

Malcolm. I desire that those friends of ours whom we do not see here may arrive safely.

Siward. Some must be dead, still by judging the persons alive, I must say that this important victory has been won without much loss on our side.

Malcolm. Macduff and your noble son are missing.

Ross. My Lord, your noble son has died fighting like a soldier. He had only just attained his manhood. He soon proved his physical strength,

In the unshrinking station where he fought,
But like a man he died.

Siward. Then he is dead?

Ross. Ay, and brought off the field: your cause of sorrow.
Must not be measured by his worth, for then.
It hath no end.

Siward. Had he his *hurts before*[1] ?

Ross. Ay, on the front.

Siward. Why then, God's soldier be he!
Had I as many sons as I have hairs,
I would not wish them to a fairer death:
And so, his *knell is knoll'd*[2].

Malcolm. He's worth more sorrow,
And that I'll spend for him.

Siward. He's worth no more:
They say he *parted well*,[3] and *paid his score*:[4]
And so, God be with him! Here comes newer comfort.

Re-renter MACDUFF, *with* MACBETH'S *head*

Macd. Hail, king! for *so thou art*[5]: *behold*[6], where stands.
The usurper's cursed head: the time is free:
I see thee *compass'd*[7] with thy kingdom's *pearl*,[8]
That speak my salutation in their minds;
Whose voices I desire aloud with mine:
Hail, King of Scotland!

All. Hail, King of Scotland! [*Flourish.*

Malcolm. We shall not spend a large expense of time.
Before we reckon with your several loves,
And make us even with you. My thanes and kinsmen,
Henceforth[9] be earls, the first that ever Scotland

1. Wounded in front.
2. Death bell is rung
3. Died well.
4. Discharged his debt.
5. You are the king.
6. See.
7. Encircled.
8 Nobles.
9. From now on.

for he fought in a fearless manner in order to hold fast his post in the battle-field. He died fighting like a brave hero.

Siward. Is he then dead ?

Ross. Yes, and his body has been brought away from the battle-field. You should not feel sorrow at his death because then it will be as measureless as his valour, having no end.

Siward. Did he receive his wounds in the front part of his body ?

Ross. Yes, on the front.

Siward. In that case I am not sorry. May God take him under His care. If I had as many sons as the hair on my head, I would not wish them to die a nobler death than that of my this son and so his funeral bell is rung.

Malcolm. He deserves deeper expression of sorrow and I shall do that for him.

Siward. He does not stand in need of more mourning. I am told that he died like a man and thus paid his debt to life. I wish, may God be with him ! Here comes pleasant news.

Re-enter MACDUFF, *with* MACBETH'S *head.*

Macduff. I hail you as a king, Malcolm, because now you are the king of Scotland. Look here, I have got the cursed head of the usurper. The day of freedom for the country has dawned. I see you surrounded by the jewels of your realm, who are greeting you as a King silently in their hearts. I beg them to join me in loudly acclaiming you as King of Scotland !

All. Hail, King of Scotland ! [*Flourish.*

Malcolm. We shall, without any loss of time, discharge the debt of gratitude we owe to each of you for your love and loyalty to ourselves and to the cause of the country. My thanes and kinsmen we bestow upon you the title of earls. You are the first in Scotland.

In such an honour named. What's more to do,
Which would be planted newly with the time,—
As calling home our exiled friends abroad,
That fled the snares of *watchful tyranny* ;[1]
Producing forth the cruel ministers
Of this dead butcher and his *fiend-like*[2] queen,
Who, as 'tis thought, by self and violent hands
Took off her life ; this, and what needful else
That calls upon us, by the grace of *Grace*,[3]
We will perform in measure, time and place :
So, thanks to all at once and to each one,
Whom we invite to see us crown'd at Scone.

[*Flourish. Exeunt.*

1. Tyrant who employs spies to watch people.
2. Devil like.
3. God.

to be honoured with the title. There are some other things which we have to do with the ushering of the new era in the country. We call back home our friends now living in exile because they had to leave the country in order to escape from the clutches of the tyrant who employed spies to watch them ; tracing out and punishing the agents of this butcher and his devilish queen, who is said to have committed suicide. All these and other necessary things which need our attention we shall perform, by the grace of God, in proper degree as soon as time and opportunity permit us. So, with thanks to all and each one of you, we invite you to witness our coronation ceremony at Scone.

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SECTION VII

OPINIONS ON *MACBETH*

VAN DOREN—*Shakespeare*

1. Brilliance. The *brevity* of "Macbeth" is so much a function of its *brilliance* that we might lose rather than gain by turning up the lost scenes of legend. The brilliance gives us in the end somewhat less than the utmost that tragedy can give. The hero, for instance, is *less valuable as a person* than Hamlet, Othello, or Lear or Antony, or Coriolanus, or Timon. We may not rejoice in his fall as **Dr. Johnson** says we must, yet we have known too little about him and have found *too little virtue* in him to experience at his death the sense of an unutterable and tragic loss made necessary by *ironies beyond our understanding*. He commits murder in violation of a nature which we can *assume* to have been noble, but we can only *assume* this. Macbeth has surrendered his soul *before* the play begins. When we first see him he is *already* invaded by those *fears* which are to render him *vicious* and which are finally to make him *abominable*. They will also reveal him as a *great poet*. But his poetry, like the poetry of the play, is to be concerned *wholly with sensation and catastrophe*. *"Macbeth" like "Lear" is all end*; the differences appearing in the *speed* with which doom rushes down, so that this *rapidest of tragedies* suggests *whirlwinds* rather than *glaciers*, and in the fact that *terror rather than pity* in the mode of the accompanying music. *"Macbeth,"* then, is *not in the fullest known sense a tragedy*. But we do not need to suppose that this is because important parts of it have been lost. Mote of it would have had to be more of the same. And the truth is that no significant scene seems to be missing. *"Macbeth" is incomparably brilliant as it stands, and within its limits perfect*. What it does it does with flawless force. It *hurls a universe against a man*, and if the universe that strikes is more impressive than the man who is stricken, great as his size and gaunt as his soul may be, there is no good reason for doubting that this is what Shakespeare intended. The triumph of *Macbeth* is the *construction of a world*, and *nothing like it has ever been constructed in twenty-one hundred lines*.

2. **Strange.** The world, which is at once *without* and *within* Macbeth, can be most easily described as *strange*. The world, like the witches, is always somewhere doing its work. Even in the battle which precedes the play the thane of Glamis has made *"strange images of death"*(*I, iii, 97*), and when he comes home to his lady his face is *"as a book where men may read strange matters"* (*I, v, 63-4*). Duncan's horses after his murder turn wild in nature and devour each other—*"a thing most strange and certain"* (*II, iv, 14*). Nothing is as it should be in such a world. *"Who would have thought the old man to have had so much blood in him ?"* This is a *drift of disorder* in all events, and the air is *murky* with *unwelcome miracles*.

3. **Dark.** It is a *dark world* too, inhabited from the beginning by witches who meet on a *blasted heath in thunder and lightning*, and who *hover* through *fog* and *filthy air* as they leave on *unspeakable* errands. It is a world wherein *"men must not walk too late"* (*I, vi, 7*), for the night that was so pretty in *"Romeo and Juliet," A Midsummer Night's Dream"* and *"The Merchant of Venice"* has grown *terrible* with *ill-smelling mists* and the *stench of blood*. The time that was once a playground for free and loving spirits has closed like a bottomless pit. The *"dark hour* that Banquo borrows from the night is his last hour on earth which has *lost the distinction between sun and gloom*.

Darkness does the face of earth entomb
When living light should kiss it.

The second of these lines makes a sound that is notable in the play *for its rarity* : the sound of life in its *normal ease* and *lightness*. Drakness prevails because the witches, whom Banquo calls its instruments, have *willed* to produce it. But Macbeth is its *instrument* as well as its *victim*. And the weird sisters no less than he are expressions of an evil that *employs* them both and has roots running *farther into darkness than the mind can guess*.

4. **Uncertain.** It is furthermore a world in which *nothing is certain* to keep its shape. *Forms shift and consistencies alter*, so that what was soild may flow and what was fluid may congeal to stone. *The earth hath bubbles, as the water has*, says Banquo of the vanished witches. Macbeth

addresses the "*sure and firm set earth*" (*II, i, 56*) but nothing could be less firm than the whole marble and the founded rock he has *fancied* his life to be. At the very moment he speaks he has seen *a dagger which is not there*, and the "*strange infirmity*" he confesses at the banquet will consist of *seeing things that cannot be*. His first apostrophe to the witches had been to creatures

That look not like the inhabitants of the earth
And yet are on' t.

So now a dead man lives ; Banquo's brains are out but he rises again and "*this is more strange than such a murder is.*"

Take any shape but that, and my firm nerves
Shall never tremble.

But the shape of everything is wrong, and the nerves of Macbeth are *never proof* against trembling. The cardinal instance of transformation is himself. *Bellona's bridegroom has been turned to jelly.*

5. **Thick Atmosphere**. The *current of change*, pouring for ever through this universe, has at last effect, *dissolved* it. And the dissolution of so much that was solid has liberated *deadly fumes*, has *thickened* the air until it *suffocates* all breathers. If the footing under men is *less substantial* than it was, the atmosphere they must push through is almost too *heavy for life*. It is confining, swarming, swelling ; it is *vicious*, it is *sticky* : and it *threatens strangulation*. All of the speakers in the play *conspire to create the impression that this is so*. Not only do the witches in their opening scene wail "*Fair is foul, and foul is fair*" but the *military men* who enter after them anticipate in their talk of recent battle the imagery of entanglement to come. *Macbeth's sword is reported to have "smok'd with bloody executions," aud he and Banquo were "as cannons overcharg'd with double cracks"; they*

Doubly redoubled strockes upon the foer

The hyperbole is *ominous*, the excess is *sinister*. In the third scene, after what seemed corporal in the witches has melted into the wind, Ross and Angus join Banquo and Macbeth to report the praises of Macbeth that had poured in on Duncan "*as thick as hail*," and to salute the new thane of Cawdor. But the imagined act of murder *swells* in his mind until it is too big for it place, and his

heart beats as if it were *chocking* in its chamber. Meanwhile Lady Macbeth at home is visited by no such fears. When the crisis comes she will break sooner than her husband does, but her *brittleness* then will mean the same thing that her melodrama means now: she is a *slighter* person than Macbeth, has a *poorer imagination*, and holds in her mind *less* of that power which enables it to stand up under torture. The news that Duncan is coming to her house *inspires* her to pray that *her blood be made thick*; for the theme of *thickness* is so far not terrible in her thought. [*I, v, 51-5.*]

The blanket of the *dark*—it seems to her an *agreeable image*, and by no means suggests an element that can enwrap or smother. With Macbeth it is *different*. His soliloquy in the seventh scene shows him occupied with images of *net and tangle*: the consequences of Duncan's death may *coil about him like an endless rope.* [*I, vii, 1—10.*]

And his voice rises to *shrillness* as he broods in terror upon the *endless echo* which such a death may make in the world.

It is *terror* such as this that Lady Macbeth must endeavour *to allay* in what is after all a great mind. Her scolding cannot do so. She has commanded him *to screw his courage to the sticking-point*, but what is the question that *haunts* him when he comes from Duncan's bloody bed, with hands that can *never be washed white again?*

He must not consider such things so *deeply*, his lady warns him. But he does, and in good time *she follows suit.* That same night the Scottish earth, shaking in a convincing sympathy as the Roman earth in "*Julius Caesar*" never shook, considers the grievous state of universe that *suffocates* in the breath of its own history. *Lamentings* are heard in the air, *strange screams* of death, and *prophecies* of *dire combustion* and *confused events* [*II, iii, 61-3*].

Macbeth is now king, but his fears "*stick deep*" in Banquo (*III, i, 50*). The thought of one more murder that will give him perhaps the "*clearness*" he requires (*III, i, 133*) seems for a moment to *free* his mind from it old obsessive

horror of *dusk and thickness,* and he can actually invoke these conditions—in the only verse he ever uses with conscious literary intention :—

Come, seeling night,
Scarf up the tender eye of pitiful day,
And with thy bloody and invisible hand
Cancel and tear to pieces that great bond
Which keeps me pale ! Light thickens, and the crow
Makes wing to the rooky wood ;
Good things of day begin to droop and drowse,
While night's black agents to their preys do rouse.

The *melodrama* of this, and its *inferiority* of effect, may warn us that Macbeth is only *pretending to hope.* The news of Fleance's escape brings him at any rat his *fit* again, and he never more ceases to be "*cabin'd, cribb'd, confin'd*" (*III, iv, 24*). He is *caught in the net for good,* his feet have *sunk into quicksands* from which they cannot be freed, his bosom like Lady Macbeth's is "*stuff'd*" with "*perilous stuff which weighs upon the heart*" (*V, iii, 44-5*)—the *figure varies,* but the *theme does not.* A strange world not wholly of his own making has closed around him and rendered him motionless. His gestures are *spasmodic* at the end, like those of one who knows he is hopelessly *engulfed.* And every metaphor he uses betrays his belief that *the universal congestion is past cure* :

What rhubarb, senna, or what purgative drug,
Would scour these English hence ? (*V, iii, 55-6*).

The answer is *none.*

6. Symbols. The *theme never varies,* however rich the range of *symbols* employed to suggest it. (*a*) *One* of these symbols is of *course the fear* that shakes Macbeth as if he were an *object not human* ; that makes him *start* when the witches call him "*King hereafter,*" that *sets his heart knocking at his ribs,* that *wrings from him unsafe extremities of rhetoric,* that *reducee him to a maniac* when Banquo walks again, that *spreads from him to all of Scotland until its inhabitants "float upon a wild and violent sea" of terror IV, ii, 21*), and that in the end, when he has lost the

capacity to feel anything any longer, *drains from him so that he almost forgets its taste (V, v, 9).* (*b*) *Another symbol*, and one that presents itself to several of our senses at once, is *blood*. Never in a play has there been *so much* of this substance, and never has it been *so sickening*. "*What bloody man is that?*" The second scene opens with a messenger running into Duncan *red with wounds*. And *blood darkens* every scene thereafter. *It is not bright red, nor does it run freely and wash away.* Nor is it a metaphor as it was in "*Julius Caesar.*" It is so *real* that we *see*, *feel*, and *smell* it on everything. *And it sticks.* "*This is a sorry sight,*" says Macbeth, as he comes from Duncan's murder, staring at his hands. He had not thought there would be *so much* blood on them, or that it would *stay* there like that. Lady Macbeth is for washing the "*filthy witness*" off, but Macbeth knows that all great Neptune's *ocean will not make him clean*: rather his hand, plunged into the green, will make it all one red. The *blood* of the play is everywhere *physical* in its looks and *gross* in its quantity. Lady Macbeth "*smears*" the grooms with it, so that when they are found they seem "*ba.:g'd*" and "*unmannerly breech'd*" with gore, and "*steep'd*" in the colours of their trade. The murderer who comes to report Banquo's death has *blood on his face*, and the "*blood-bolter'd Banquo*" when he appears shakes "*gory locks*" at Macbeth, who in deciding upon the assassination has reflected that:

> *I am in blood*
> *Stepp'd in so far that, should I wade no more*
> *Returning were as tedious as go o'er.*

Richard III had said a similar thing, but he suggested no veritable *pool or swamp* of blood as this man does: and his victims, wailing over their calamities, did not mean the c ncrete thing Macduff means when he cries, "*Bleed, bleed, poor country!*" (*IV, iii, 31*). *The world of the play quite literally bleeds.* And Lady Macbeth, walking in her sleep, has definite *stains upon the palms she rubs and rubs.* "*Yet, here's a spot......What, will these hands ne'er be clean?... Here's the smell of the blood still; all the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand.*"

(c) *A third symbol*, of *greater potency* than either fear or blood, is *sleeplessness*. Just as there are more terrors in the night than day has ever taught us, and more blood in a man than there should be, so there is less sleep in this disordered world than the minimum which once had been required for health and life. One of the final signs of that disorder is indeed the death of sleep :

Methought I heard a voice cry, "Sleep no more :
Macbeth does murder sleep...
Glamis hath murder'd sleep, and therefore Cawdor
Shall sleep no more : Macbeth shall sleep no more."

Nothing that Macbeth says is more *terrible* than this and no dissolution suffered by his world is more *ominous*. For *sleep in Shakespeare is ever the privilege of the good and the reward of the innocent*. If it has been *put to death* there is *no goodness left*. One of the witches knows how to torture sailors *by keeping sleep from their pent-house lids* (*I,iii, 19-30*), but only Macbeth can *murder sleep itself*. The result in the play is an ultimate weariness. The "*restless ecstasy*" with which Macbeth's bed is made miserable, and "*The affliction of these terrible dreams*

That shake as nightly."

Such things are dreadful, but his final fatigue is more dreadful still, for it is the fatigue of a soul that has worn itself out with watching fears, wading in blood, and waking to the necessity of new murders for which the hand has no relish. Macbeth's hope that when Macduff is dead he can "*sleep in spite of thunder*" (*IV, i, 86*) is after all no hope. For *there is no sleep in Scotland* (*III, vi, 34*). *Terror* has degenerated into *tedium* and *only death can follow*, either for Macbeth who *lacks the season of all natures* or for his lady *who not only walks but talks when she should sleep*, and who will *not die holily in her bed*.

Meanwhile, however, (*d*) *another element* has gone away, and it is one so *fundamental* to man's experience that Shakespeare has given it a *central position* among those symbols which express the *disintegration* of the hero's world. *Time* is *out of joint, inoperative, dissolved*. "*The time has been*," says Macbeth, *when he could fear* : and "*the time has been*" *that when the brains were out a man would*

die, and there an end (*III, iv, 78—80*). The *repetition* reveals that Macbeth is *haunted* by a sense that time has *slipped its grooves* : it flows *wild* and *formless* through his world, and is the *deep cause* of all the *anomalies* that terrify him. Certain of these anomalies are *local* or *specific* : the *bell* that rings on the night of the murder, the *knocking* at the gate, the *flight* of Macduff into England at the very moment Macbeth plans his death, and the *disclosure* that Macduff was from his mother's womb untimely ripp'd. Many things happen too soon, so that tidings are like *serpents* that strike *without* warning. *"The King comes here tonight,"* says a messenger and Lady Macbeth is *startled* out of all composure : *"Thou'rt mad to say it !"* (*I. v, 32*). But other anomalies are general, and these are the *worst*.

The words of Banquo to the witches :

> *If you can look into the seeds of time,*
> *And say which grain will grow and which will not,*

plant early in the play a conception of *time as something which fulfils itself by growing* and which, the season being wrong, *can swell to monstrous shape*. Or it can find *crannies* in the mold and extend *secret*, sinister roots into dark soil that never has known them. Or it *can have no growth at all* ; it cannot *fester* in its place, and *die*. The conception *wavers*, like the courage of Macbeth, but it will not away. Duncan welcomes Macbeth to Forres with the words :

> *I have begun to plant thee, and will labour*
> *To make thee full of growing.*

But Macbeth, like time itself, will *burgeon beyond bounds*.

When Lady Macbeth, greeting her husband, says with excited assurance :

> *Thy letters have transported me beyond*
> *This ignorant present, and I feel now*
> *The future in the instant,*

she cannot suspect, nor can he, how sadly the relations *between present and future* will maintain itself. If the *present* is the *womb* or *seed-bed* of the *future*, if *time* is a *succession of growths* each one of which lives cleanly and freely after the death of the one before it, *then what is to prevail will scarcely be recognizable as time.* The seed will *not grow*; the future will *not be born* out of the present; the plant *will not disentable* itself from its bed, but will *stick* there in stillbirth:

> *Thou sure and firm set earth,*
> *Hear not my steps, which way they walk, for fear*
> *Thy very stones prate of my whereabout,*
> *And take the present horror from the time,*
> *Which now suits it*

prays Macbeth on the eve of Duncan's death. But time and horror will *not suit* so neatly through the nights to come; the present moment will look like all *eternity*, and horror will be *smeared* on every hour. *Time makes sense no longer*; its *proportions* are *strange*, its *content meaningless.* For Lady Macbeth in her mind's disease the *minutes have ceased to march in their true file and order*; her sleep-walking soliloquy recapitulates the play, but there is no temporal design among the fragments of the past—the blood, the body of Duncan, the fears of her husband, the ghost of Banquo, the slaughter of Macduff, the ringing of the bell, and again the blood—which float detached from one another in her memory. And for Macbeth *time* has become:

> *a tale*
> *Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,*
> *Signifying nothing.*

Death is dusty, and the future is a limitless desert of tomorrows. His reception of the news that Lady Macbeth has died is like nothing else of a similar sort of Shakespeare.

But Macbeth, *drugged* beyond feeling, supped full with horrors, and *tired* of bothering so much as of coincidence in calamity, can only say in a voice devoid of tone:

She should have died hereafter;
There would have been a time for such a word.

There would, that is, if there were such a thing as time. There such words as "*died* and *hereafter*" would have their meaning. Not now, however for *time itself died*.

7. Contrast. Duncan was everything that Macbeth is not. We saw him briefly but the brilliance of his *contrast* with the thane he trusted *has kept his memory throughout* a play whose every other feature has been hideous. He was "*meek*" and "*clear*" (*I, vii, 17—8*), and his mind was *incapable of suspicion*. Duncan's was a *free spirit* and *could weep*, a thing impossible to his murderer's stopped heart. The word "*love*" was *native to his tongue*; he used it *four times* within the *twenty lines* of his conversation with Lady Macbeth, and its *clear beauty* as he spoke it was reflected that night in the *diamond* he sent her by Banquo (*II, i, 15*). As he approached Macbeth's castle in the late afternoon the building had known its only moment of serenity and fairness.

Summer, heavens, wooing, and procreation in the delicate air—such words suited the presence of a king who when later on was found stabbed in his bed would actually offer a fair sight to guilty eyes. *His blood was not like the other blood in the play, thick and fearfully discoloured.* It was *bright, beautiful*, as no one better than Macbeth could appreciate.

Here lay Duncan,
His silver skin lac'd with his golden blood.

—the *silver* and the *gold* when with the *diamond*, and with Duncan's *gentle senses* that could smell no treachery though a whole house reeked with it. And Duncan of course *could sleep*. After life's fitful fever he had been *laid* where nothing could touch him further. No terrible dreams to shake him nightly, and no fears of things lest they come stalking through the world before their time in borrowed shapes.

8. **Good and Evil.** Scotland may seem to have become the *grave of men* and *not their mother* (*IV, iii, 166*), death and danger may claim the whole of that *bleeding* country; but there is another country to the south where a good king *works miracles with his touch.* The rest of the world is what it always was; time goes on; events seretch out through space in their proper forms. Shakespeare again has *enclosed his evil within a universe of good,* his storm centres within *wide* areas of *peace.* And from this *outer* world Malcolm and Macduff will return *to heal* Scotland of its ills. Their conversation in London before the pious Edward's palace (*IV, iii,*) is *not an interruption* of the play; it is one of its *essential parts, glancing forward* as it does to a conclusion wherein Macduff can say, "*The time is free*" and wherein Malcolm can *promise* that deeds of justice, "*planted newly with the time,* will be performed "*in measure, time and place*" (*V, iii, 62—73*). Malcolm speaks the language of the play, but he has *recovered its lost idiom.* Blood will *cease* to flow, movement will *recommence,* fear will be *forgotten,* sleep will *season* every life, and the seeds of time will *blossom* in due order. *The circle of safety which Shakespeare has drawn around his central horror is thinly drawn, but it is finely drawn and it holds.*

PROF. MOULTON—*Shakespeare as a Dramatic Artist*

1. **Nemesis.** "That the career of Macbeth," says Prof. Moulton, "is an example of *Nemesis* needs only to be stated. As in the case of Richard III, we have the rise and fall of a leading pensonage; *the rise is a crime of which the fall is the retribution.*" Preceeding further he says, "More commonly the artistic element in Nemesis consists in the *perfect equality* between the *sin* and its *retribution*; and of the later type the Nemesis in the play of *Macbeth* is perhaps the most conspicuous illustration. The rise and fall of *Macbeth,* to borrow the illustration of *Gervinus,* constitute a *perfect arch,* with a *turning-point in the centre.* Macbeth's series of *successes* is *unbroken* till it ends in the *murder of Banquo*; his series of *failures* is *unbroken* from its commencement in the *escape of Fleance.*

Success thus constituting the *first half* and *failure* the *second half* of the play, the *transition* from the one to the other is the *expedition* against Banquo and Fleance, in which *success* and *failure* are *mingled*: and this *expedition*, the *key-stone* to the *arch*, is found to occupy the *exact middle of the middle Act.*

2. Two halves. "But this is not all : not only is the play as a whole an example of nemesis, but if its *two halves* be taken *separately* they will be found to constitute each a nemesis in itself.

(*a*) **First half.** To begin with the *first half*, that which is occupied with the *rise* of Macbeth. If the plan of the play extended no further than to make the hero's fall the retribution upon his rise, *it might be expected* that the *turning point* of the action would be reached upon *Macbeth's elevation to the throne*. As a fact, however, Macbeth's *rise does not stop here ; he still goes on to win one more success* in his attempt upon the life of Banquo. What the purpose of this prolonged flow of fortune is will be seen when it is considered that this *final success of the hero is in reality the source of his ruin*. In Macbeth's progress to the attainment of the crown, while, of course, it was impossible that crimes so violent as his should not incur suspicion, yet circumstances had strangely combined to soothe these suspicions to sleep. But—so Shakespeare manipulates the story—w en Macbeth—seated on the throne, goes on to the ttempt against Banquo, *this additional crime not only brings its own punishment, but has the further effect of unmasking the crimes that have gone before*." Moulton remarks, "Thus the first half of the play, that which traces the rise of Macbeth, is a *complete Nemesis action—a career of sins in which the last sin secures the punishment of all*.

(*b*) **Latter half.** "The same reasoning applies to the *latter half* of the play ; the *fall* of Macbeth not only serves as the *retribution* for his *rise*, but further contains in itself a crime and its nemesis complete. *What Banquo is to the first half of the play, Macduff is to the latter half ; the two balance one another*, as in the play of *Julius Caesar*, Caesar, himself is by Antony ; and *Macduff comes into prominence upon Banquo's death as Antony upon the fall of Caesar*.

3. Oracular action. "The plot of *Macbeth*, both as a whole and in its separate parts, is constructed upon this form of Nemesis. The play deals with the rise and fall of Macbeth : and the fall, and again the two taken together, present each of them an example of an *oracular action*. Firstly, the former half of the play, the rise of Macbeth, taken by itself, consists in an oracle and its full-steps by which the crown is attained." Moulton further remarks, "After his first excitement has passed away, Macbeth resolves that he will have nothing to do with the temptation that lurked in the witches' words ; in his disjointed meditation we hear him saying,

> *'If chance will have me king, why chance may crown me*
> *Without my stir.'*

and again :

> *'Come what come may,*
> *Time and the hour runs through the roughest day.'*

in which last speech the very rhyming may, according to Shakespeare's subtle usage, be pointed to as marking a mind made up. So far then we appear to be following an oracular action of the second type, *that of indifference and ignoring*. But in the very next scene the proclamation of a Prince of Cumberland—that is of an heir apparent like our Prince of Wales—takes away Macbeth's chance." He instantly *commits himself* to the *evil* suggestion, and thus changes the type of action to the first variety, that in which the oracle is fulfilled by the *agency of obedience*.

4. Irony. "A second phase of destiny enters into the plot of Macbeth ; this is *irony*." Moulton claims, "The basis of Macbeth's rise is the witches' promise of the crown. Scarcely has it been given when an obstacle starts up to its fulfilment in the proclamation of Malcolm as heir-apparent. I have already pointed out," says Moulton, "that it is this very proclamation which *puts an end to Macbeth's wavering*, and leads him to undertake the treasonable enterprise which only in the previous scene he had resolved he would have nothing to do with. Later in the history a *second obstacle* appears ; the king is slain, but his two sons,

heir-apparent and his brother, escape from Macbeth's clutches and place *two lives between him and the fulfilment of his destiny*. But as events turn out, it is this very flight of the princes that, by diverting suspicion to them for a moment, causes Macbeth to be named as Duncan's successor. The learned critic says, "Twice, then, in the course of the rise Destiny allows obstacles to appear only for the sake of using them as an unexpected means of fulfilment. The same *mockery* marks the fall of the action. The *security* against a fall, promised by the apparitions to Macbeth, had just one drawback '*beware of Macduff*'; and we have already had occasion to notice Macbeth's attempt to secure himself against this drawback in the completest manner of extirpating the dangerous thane and his family to the last scion of his stock and also how this cruel purpose succeeded against all but Macduff himself." Multon says further, "Finally, if the rise and the fall be contemplated *together* as constituting *one action*, this also will be found animated by the *same spirit of irony*. The original promise of the witches, as well as the later promise of the apparition, had its drawback in the destiny that Banquo was to be lesser than Macbeth and yet greater, to beget kings though to be none; and to secure against this drawback is Macbeth's purpose in his plot against Banquo and Fleance, by which the rival family would be extirpated.

5. **Subtlety**. "Such is the *subtlety* with which Shakespeare has constructed this plot of Macbeth, and *interwoven in its Nemesis and Destiny*. To outward appearance it is connected with the rise and fall of a sinner; the analysis, that searches for *inner* principles of construction, traces through its incidents *three forms of action working harmoniously* together, by which the rise and fall of Macbeth are so linked as to exhibit at once a crime with its Nemesis, an Oracle with its fulfilment, and the Irony which works by the agency of that which resists it. Again, the separate halves of the play, the rise and the fall of the hero, are found to present each the same *triple pattern* as the whole. Once more, with the careers of Macbeth are associated the careers of Banquo and Macduff, and these also reflect the *threefold spirit*. Macbeth's rise involves Banquo's fall; this

fall is the subject of oracular prediction, it is the *starting-point of nemesis* on Macbeth, and it has an element of irony in the fact that Banquo all but escaped. With Macbeth's fall is bound up Macduff's rise ; this also had been predicted in oracles, it is an *agency* in the main nemesis, and Macduff's fate has the *irony* that he all but perished at the outset of his mission. Through all the separate interests of this elaborate plot, the *three* forms of action—*Nemesis, the Oracular, Irony*—are seen perfectly *harmonised* and perfectly *complete*. *And over all this is thrown the supernatural interest* of the witches, who are the *agents of nemesis working by the means of ironical oracle.*"

QUILLER-COUCH—*Shakespeare's Workmanship*

1. Shortest. "I shall assume that Macbeth is an *eminently effective* play : that, by consent, it produces a *great and intended impression* on the mind. It is the *shortest* of Shakespeare's plays, save *The Comedy of Errors*. It is told in just under 2000 lines—carcely more than half the length of Hamlet. We may attribute this *brevity* in part —and we shall attribute it rightly—to its *simplicity of plot* but that does not matter ; or, rather, it goes all to Macbeth's *credit*. The half *artistry* consists in learning to make *one stroke better than two*. The more sinpy, economically you produce the impression aimed at, the *better workman* you may call yourself.

2. Acting play. "This play had to be an *acting play*, by which, of course, I mean a play to succeed on the *boards* and *entertain*, for *three hours* or so, an *audience* which had *paid* to be entertained. This *differentiates it* at once *from* a *literary composition* meant to be *read* by the *fiireside* where the kettle does all the hissing. Therefore, to understand what Shakespeare *as a workman* was driving at, we must in imagination seat ourselves amid *the audience he held in mind* as he worked."

3. Hero. "The success or failure of *tragedy* depends on what sort of *person we represent* ; and principally, of course,

on what sort of person we make our chief tragic figure, our protagonist," says Quiller-Couch. "A *hero* of tragic drama *must*, whatever else he misses, *engage our sympathy* ; that, however gross his error or grievous his frailty, it must not exclude our feeling that he is a man like ourselves; that sitting in the audience we must know in our hearts that what is befalling him might conceivably in the circumstances have befallen *us*, and say in our hearts "There, but for the grace of God, go I."

Quiller-Couch rightly remarks that the hero of *Macbeth* was a *murderer*, and a murderer for his *private profit*—a combination, which *does not appeal* to most of us, to unlock the flood-gates of *sympathy* or (I hope) as striking home upon any private and pardonable frailty. Deliberately this magnificent artist *locks every door* on condonation, plunges the guilt deep as hell, *and then tucks up his sleeves.*

4. **Problem**. *How* could Shakespeare make his audience *feel pity or terror* for *such* a man ? Not for the dead, not for Duncan but for Macbeth, *doer of the deed* ; how make them sympathise, saying inwardly, 'There, but for the grace of God, might you go, or I ?

5. **Artifices**. "He could, by *majesty of diction*, make them feel that Macbeth was somehow a *great* man ; and this he did. He could conciliate their sympathy at the start by presenting Macbeth as a *brave and victorious soldier* ; and this he did. He could show him *drawn* to the deed, *against will and conscience*, by persuasion of another, a woman : and this—though it is *extremely dangerous* since all submission of will *forfeits something of manliness*, lying apparently on the side of cowardice, *forfeits sympathy*—this, too, Shakespeare did. He could trace the desperate act to *ambition*, last infirmity of noble minds ; and this again he did. All these *artifices* and more, Shakespeare used. But yet they do not begin—they do not pretend—to surmount the main difficulty which I have indicated, *how of such a criminal to make a hero ?*

"It is to make our hero—*supposed great*, *supposed brave*, *supposed of certain winning natural gifts*—proceed to

his crime under some *fatal hallucination*. It must *not* be an hallucination of mere *madness*; for that merely *revolts*. In our treatment of lunatics we have come to be far *tenderer* than the Elizabethans. Still, to us madness remains unaccountable; a *human breakdown*, out of which anything may happen.

6. **Hallucination.** "Further, such an hallucination *once established upon a strong mind*, the more forcibly that mind reasons the more desperate will be the conclusion of its error; the more powerful is the will, or combination of wills, the more irreparable will be the deed to which it drives, as with the more anguish we shall follow the once noble soul step by step to its ruin."

WILLIAM HAZLITT—*Character of Shakespeare's plays*

1. **Distinguished**. "This tragedy is alike distinguished for the *lofty imagination* it displays, and for the *tumultuous vehemence* of the action; and the one is made the moving principle of the other. The overwhelming *pressure of preternatural agency* urges on the tide of human passion with *redoubled force*. Macbeth himself appears *driven* along by the violence of his fate like a vessel drifting before a storm; he *reels* to and fro like a drunken man; he *staggers* under the weight of his own purposes and the suggestions of others; he *stands at bay* with his situation; and from the *superstitious awe and breathless suspense* into which the communications of the weird sisters throw him, is hurried on with daring impatience to verify their predictions, and with *impious and bloody* hand to tear aside the veil which hides the uncertainty of the future. He is equal to the struggle with fate and conscience. He now *'bends up each corporal instrument to the terriable feat,'* at other times his heart misgives him and he is *cowed* and *abashed* by his success. *'The deed no less than the attempt confounds him.'* He mind is *assailed* by the *stings of remorse* and full of *'preternatural soliciting.'* His speeches and soliloquies are *dark riddles* on human life, *baffling solution*, and entangling him in their labyrinths. In thought he is *absent* and

perplexed, sudden and *desperate* in act, from a *distrust* of his own resolution. His energy springs from the *anxiety* and *agitation* of his mind. He *blindly* rushes forward on the objects of his *ambition* and *revenge*, or his recoiling from them, equally betray the *harassed state* of his feelings. This part of his character is admirably set off by being brought in connection with that of Lady Macbeth, whose *obdurate strength*, of will and *masculine firmness* give her the *ascendancy* over her husband's *faltering virtue*. She at once *seizes on the opportunity* that offers for the accomplishment of all their wished-for greatness, and never flinches from her object till all is over. *The magnitude of her resolution almost covers the magnitude of her guilt*. She is a *great bad woman*, 'whom we *hate*, but whom we *fear more than we hate*. She does not excite our loathing and abhorrence like Regan and Goneril. She is only *wicked* to gain a great end; and is perhaps more distinguished by her *commanding presence* of mind and *inexorable self-will*, which do not suffer her to be diverted from a bad purpose, when once formed by weak and womanly affections.

2. Principle of Contrast. "*Macbeth* (generally speaking) is done upon a *stronger and systematic principle of contrast* than any other of Shakespeare's plays. It moves upon the *verge of an abyss*, and is a *constant struggle* between *life and death*. The *action* is desperate and the *reaction* is dreadful. It is a huddling together of *fierce extremes*, a war of opposite natures which of them shall destroy the other. There is noting but what has a *violent end* or *violent beginning*. The lights and shades are laid on with a *determined hand*; the transitions from *triumph to despair*, from the height of *terror to the repose* of death, are sudden and startling; every passion brings in its follow-contrary, and the *thoughts pitch and jostle against each other as in the dark*. The whole play is an *unruly chaos* of strange and forbidden things, where the *ground rocks under our feet*."

F. J. FURNIVALL

Play of Conscience. "Macbeth is the *play of conscience*, though the workings of the conscience are seen much

more *clearly* in Lady Macbeth than in her husband. The play shows, too, the *separation* from man as well as God, the miserable trustless *isolation* that sin brings in its train." Furnivall continues, "Before the play opens there *must have been consultations* between the *guilty pair* on Duncan's murder ; and when the play opens the *pall of fiendish witchcraft* is over us from the first. That fall of the tempted is terribly *sudden*. *The climax of the play is in the second Act, not the fifth*, and no repentance is mixed with the vengeance at its close. The *only relief* is in the *gallantry of Macbeth*, the *gratitude of Duncan*, and the pleasant *picture of Macbeth's castle* so well put in Duncan's and Banquo's mouths." Furnivall remarks, "Macbeth had the *wrong nature* for a murderer : he was *too imaginative*, he could jump the life to come, but it was the judgment here he dreaded ; the terrors that his own Keltic imagination created to torment him." Furnivall observes, " After his second visit to the witches it seems to me that the courage of desperation takes the place of the *feebleness* of the *guilty soul* ; and except in his two drops down after the servant and the messenger have announced the English, he faces his fate with the *courage and coolness* that should have possessed him all along. He is *tied to the stake*, and fight he will ; but though he quails again before Macduff's tongue, he is yet taunted by it."

Dr. HERMANN URRICI—*Shakespeare's Dramatic Art*

Macbeth and his Lady. "As attempts have been made to rob *Macbeth* of his *manliness* and *heroic greatness* by maintaining that *courage* and *bravery* are not innate qualities of his nature, but mere expressions of his *blood-thirstiness* and *cruelty*, or at all events the mere results of *excitement, passion* and *despair*, so, on the other hand, it has been thought necessary to save Lady Macbeth's womanliness by the supposition that she is *not ambitious* on her own account, but more out of *love* for her husband. *Both of the suppositions, in my opinion, are erroneous*. As regards Macbeth, the unbiased reader requires no proof of the poet's having

in him, though of a *great and noble* character, and *heroic nature* of the old northern power and bulk. Now Lady Macbeth is of the *same heroic nature*, of the *same stuff*, although in *female form*, consequently without feminine devotion, without love. A species of love she, no doubt, has for her husband, but what can this species of love signify but that it is, in reality, *no right love*. She is a woman who—owing to her *capacity* for rising to the *enthusiasm of passion* in order to attain a great object, and owing to her *eminent intellect*, her *firmness* and *decision* of character, more especially the *strength* of mind with which she contrives to master her *sanguine choleric temperament* and her *violent impulses*—has, inwardly, even more of a *natural vocation* for ruling than Macbeth. *Ambition* in her, therefore, takes more the form of *love dominion than thirst for honour*—this is expressly stated by Holinshed in his *Chronicle*, which Shakespeare made use of, and is also intimated by Macbeth in his letter to his wife ; this, in fact, lies in the *nature* of woman, woman without love has a desire to rule, and a woman who wishes to rule is incapable of loving, at least, as a woman she loves her husband simply as an equal. In this sense she loves and esteems Macbeth as the *worthy partner* of her strivings, as the strong, active accomplisher of their common plans, as a congenial mind of the same heroic nature as her own. But there can be no question about any other than this kind of love, either in her case or in Macbeth's it is evident that *there is no sincere communion of souls, pure, disinterested personal devotion between them, either on her part or on his.*"

ARTHUR SYMONS

1. Swiftest. "Of all Shakespeare's tragedies *Macbeth* is the simplest in outline, the *swiftest in action*. After the witches' prelude, the first scene brings us *at once* into the centre of stormy interest, and in Macbeth's first words an ambiguous note prepares us for strange things to come. Thence to the end is *no turning* speed of events. Thought *jumps* to action, action is *overtaken* by consequences, with a precipitate haste, as if it were all written breathlessly. And in the style (always the style of Shakespeare's maturity) there is a

hurry, an *impatient condensation, metaphor running into metaphor, thought on the heels of thought*, which gives (apart from the undoubted corruption of the text) something *abrupt, difficult, violent*, to the language of even unimportant characters, messenger or soldiers. If here and there a philosophical thought meets us, it is the outcry of *sensation* rather than a *reflection* in any true sense of the word.

2. Pathos. Of *pathos*, even, there is not on the whole much. In Act IV, Scene iii, there is, I think, *a note of pathos beyond which language cannot go*; and in the scene which leads up to it—a scene full of the most *delicate humour*, the humour born of the *unconscious nearness of things pitiful*—there is something truly pathetic, a pathos which clings about all Shakespeare's portraits of children. But elsewhere, even in place where we might expect it, there is but little sign of a quality with which it was not in Shakespeare's plan to *lighten* the terror or *soften* the hardness of the impression one receives from this sombre play.

3. Terror. Terror was the effect at which he seems to have aimed, terror standing out vividly against a background of obscure and yet more *dreadful mystery*. The '*root of horror*' from which the whole thing grows has been planted in *hell*. Do the supernatural solicitings merely foreshow or do they really instigate the deeds to which they bear witness ? Omens *blacken* every page. An 'Old Man' is brought into the play for no other purpose than to become the appropriate mouthpiece of the popular sense of the strange disturbance in the order of nature—In no other play of Shakespeare's, not even in *Hamlet*, is the power of spiritual agencies *so present with us*, nowhere is Fate *so visibly* the handmaid or the mistress of Retribution. In such a play it is no wonder that *pathos is swallowed up in terror*, and that the only really frank abandonment to humour is in an interlude of *ghastly pleasantry* (*i.e.*, the Porter's soliloquy).

4. Two Persons. The interest of the play is *narrowed* and *intensified* by being directed almost wholly upon *two*

persons. Macbeth and Lady Macbeth fill the stage. In painting them Shakespeare has expended his *full power.* He has cared to do *no more than sketch* the other characters. These *subordinate* figures are *forgotten* in the absorbing interest of the two primary ones. The *real conflict*, out of which the action grows, is the conflict between the *worse and better natures* of those two persons ; the *real tragedy* is one of *conscience*, and the murder of Duncan, the assassination of Banquo, the slaughters with which the play is studded, are but the *outward signs*, the bloody signature of *the terrible drama which is going on within.*"

FRANZ HORN

Destiny. We possess, first of all, in this drama, what there is much said about at random, *a pure, simple tragedy of Destiny*, that is, as concerns Macbeth, the representation of a conflict in which *freedom*, not yet complete in itself, *suffers defeat* and becomes the *prey of necessity*. But this result by no means proves the absolute supremacy of destiny, but only the danger in certain individuals of an ill-secured and imperfect freedom which, as such, must necessarily *yield to destiny*. The poet shows throughout that Macbeth was *not forced to act* because destiny willed it, but that he fell because he *put no faith in his freedom* ; but he could *not trust* that, because he understood not how to render it *complete*. Franz Horn says, "The necessity which Macbeth obeys, because he is *not free*, exists in his own heart whose weakness the dark powers made use of to prepare him for his fall. He is of sufficient importance to stir up all Hell against him ; a prey such as he is, is quite worth the trouble, *and Hell is Hell is perfectly right when it busies itself so eagerly about him.*"

COLERIDGE

A contrast. "In *Hamlet* and *Macbeth* the scene opens with superstition ; but in each it is not merely different, but *opposite*. In the first it is connected with the *best* and *holiest* feelings ; in the second with the *shadowy, turbulent*, and *unsanctified* cravings of the individual will. Nor is the purpose the same ; in the one the object is to *excite*,

whilst in the other it is *to mark* a mind already excited. 'The Weird Sisters are as *true* a creation of Shakespeare's as his Ariel and Caliban, fates, furies, and materialising witches being the elements. They are wholly *different* from any representation of witches in the contemporary writers, and yet present a sufficient external resemblance to the creature of *vulgar* prejudice to act immediately on the audience. Their character consists in the imaginative disconnected from the good; they are the shadowy *obscure* of physical nature, the *lawless* of human nature. The true reason for the first appearance of the witches is to strike the *key-note* of the character of the whole drama. Macbeth is described by Lady Macbeth so as at the same time to reveal her own character. Could he have everything he wanted, he would rather have it *innocently*:—ignorant, as alas! how many of us are, that he who wishes a temporal and for itself does in truth will the means; and hence the danger of indulging in fancies. Lady Macbeth, like all in Shakespeare, is a class individualised:—of high rank, left much alone, and feeding herself with day-dreams of ambition, she mistakes the courage of fantasy for the power of bearing the consequences of the realities of guilt. Hers is *mock fortitude* of a mind deluded by ambition: she shames her husband with a *super-human audacity* of fancy which she cannot support, but sinks in the *season of remorse*, and dies in *suicidal agony*."

CONNINGHAM

Porter. The low soliloquy of the porter, and his few speeches afterwards, are believed to have been written for the *mob* by some *other* hand, perhaps with Shakespeare's consent—not one syllable has the ever present being of Shakespeare. But the porter undoubtedly belongs to the family of Shakespeare's fools, though *not* perhaps to the *highest class*. It would seem if the supreme playwright in him felt the vital necessity of some *adequate relief* from the awful *tension* of the murder scene, that he acted up to this necessity and composed the scene, hurriedly perhaps, and, whilst conceding something to the groundlings, with a keen anxiety to get on with the main action of the play. None the less too did the practical playwright in him feel the *dramatic necessity* of allowing time for Macbeth to retire, change his dress, and recover his *composure*."

SECTION VIII

MEANINGS AND EXPLANATIONS

ACT I—SCENE I

Thunder......Witches. According to **Sargeaunt** the public appearance of the witches is suggestive of Duncan's weakness. "In a Christian country," says he, "the arts of witchraft and magic are unlawful, and it is a duty of the magistrate to suppress the practice of them. The *thunder and lightning* is supernatural, brought on by diabolical activity. The existence of three women collusive in the act, close to the king's palace are not known to everyone there, is presumptive evidence of the *king's neglect.*

3. *When the hurly-burly......won.* In this first scene it is further suggested that Scotland under King Duncan is suffering insurrection and invasion from royal negligence. The three witches agree to meet again.

When the hurley-burley's done,
When the battle's lost and won,

and *That will be ere the set of sun.*

"Hurley-burley" is insurrection, what Holinshed calls "Contemptuous demeanour against the King's regal authority."

11. *Fair is foul, and foul is fair.* According to **Verity :** The line (which has a proverbial ring) is a sort of summary of the creed of the Witches, and serves as a signal to us, a warning of what we must expect from them. Some think that the line refers to the tempest as being favourable to witchcraft and its rites (line 2). When the witches are alone, their language "displays a certain fierce familiarity, grostesqueness mingled with terror"; whereas with Macbeth it is "solemn, dark, and mysterious."

ACT—I SCENE II

Verity says : Many critics consider that the text of this scene has been much mutilated. But in part, at any rate, the abruptness or exaggeration of style is acccunted for by the circumstances that the Sergeant and Ross have each just come from the stress of battle—the one wounded. Some think that the style is intentionally epic rather than tragic.

Alarum : " It is perhaps the *alarum*" says **Sargeaunt,** "that has led the editor to place the scene in a Camp near Forres, which yet may be Forres itself, Duncan's palace, in some fear of an attack. Obviously Duncan is alarmed and anxious of news.

The insurrection apparently has required the services of the rest of his thanes.

The Sergeant's plight makes him fear that his captains Macbeth and Banquo have been unsuccessful. He knows already that Malcolm would have fallen into the rebel's hands had he not been rescued.

Plainly Duncan is out of touch with his army, having no regular post, and for want of it must get his news as best he can. Of the invasion he knows nothing, and he thinks that the insurrection is yet unsuppressed.

3. *Sergeant* : "In ancient times sergeants were not the petty officers now distinguished by that title, but men performing one kind of feudal military service, *viz.*, to guard the person of the king, in the rank next to esquires." —**Verity.**

9. "The sense of *choke* is here metaphorical, but the word is suggested by the fact that the swimmers themselves will be literally choked by their art."—**Chambers.**

14,15. **Verity** explains : "Fortune showed herself as it were the mistress of the rebel and espoused his cause ; but Macbeth, supported by a higher power, *viz.*, Valour (19), made tbe aid of Fortune unavailing. Some think that show'd implies deception on the part of Fortune, *i.e.*, that she smiled on him, but deceived him.

25–28. *As whence the sun, etc.* "As storms often come from the east, the region of the dawn, so victory may be the starting-point for a fresh attack"—**Herford.** "As from that point in the year, from which the sun begins to shine with his full warmth, fierce storms burst forth, so from that point in the combat from which we might have expected things to go well with us, trouble flows in full volume."—**Deighton.**

28. *Swells.* The word suggests a swollen destructive river, whereas we should have expected the idea 'wells like a fertilising stream.' (F).

30. *Skipping* : appropriate to light-armed troops.

40. *Memorize another Golgtoha, i.e.,* create by slaughter of the enemy another "place of a skull" as famous in tradition as that mentioned in Scripture (*Matt. xxvii. 33*; *Mark xv. 22*).

49-50. "Ross takes up the story where the sergeant left it, when the flaunting banners of Norway were insulting the sky of Scotland and striking terror into her people." **Grierson.**

52-53. **Verity** points out : Holinshed does not mention Cawdor in connection with Sweno at all ; and he places Cawdor's deprival of his title, lands and offices "shortlie" after Macbeth's first meeting with the witches. But Shakespeare associates Cawdor with Sweno, so as to account for Cawdor's deprival, and to make the news of it reach Macbeth at the first great crisis of the drama.

60. *Norway's*, Norwegians'. *Composition*, terms of peace agreement. We speak of people 'composing their differences,' *i.e.*, settling.

63—64. "*Enjoy our intimacy to betray our interests.* A highly condensed phrase implying that Cawdor has been the king's bosom friend and had betrayed his dearest interests."—**Grierson.**

68. *Noble Macbeth.* **Verity** remarks : The scene closes on the note of Macbeth's glorification. It has given him

already the first place in our thoughts, and we await his appearance with curiosity. And it is in relation to him that this war-element has been introduced. For (1) through it we see the greatness of Macbeth as a soldier, and that greatness makes the tragedy of his fall so much more pitiful. Again (2) the reward he receives for his services becomes, by his previous evil meditations, an impulse towards the crime and makes his ingratitude towards the generous Duncan all the more hateful.

ACT I—SCENE III

Scene. A heath. **Brandes** remarks that Shakespeare "has altered the meadow-land, which Holinshed represents as lying around Inverness, into the heath which is really characteristic of the district," a change that heightens the 'local colour' much.

Enter the three witches. They are not simply the embodiment of the evil forces at work in the world, of the active principle of evil in nature and in society; "instruments of darkness." They lead evil minds from evil to evil, and have the power of tempting those who have been the tempters of themselves—**Coleridge.**

"Private revenge," says **Sergeaunt,** "is always of the devil's suggestion, and is characteristic of witchcraft. The other two will help her malice, accessories before the fact:

2. **Ile give thee a winde.**
1. **Th'art kind.**
3. **And I another.**

Kind to one another, they are unkind to society and their country people.

8. **Verity** says: That witches could sail on the sea, however tempestuous, "in a riddle or sieve," cockle-shell or egg-shell, could assume the form of any animal minus the tail; had control over the winds, and made money of their power by selling favourable winds to sailors "in glasses" or through "tying of certain knots upon a rope";

could cause a person to pine away by making a wax image of him and then sticking a pin into it and dissolving it before a fire ; these mere all current superstitions, which Shakespeare mentions, whatever his own opinion about witchcraft may have been.

38. **Dowden** remarks : "Shakespeare intimates by this that although Macbeth has not yet set his eyes upon these hags the connection is already established between his soul and theirs. Their spells have already wrought up his blood."

Coleridge says : "Superstition, of one sort or of another, is natural to victorious generals ; the instances are too notorious to need mention ; the main reason being that "chance" or what seems chance, plays so large a part in warfare. A signal instance with Napoleon with his belief in his "star," lucky days, etc.

51. *Why do you start...* ? "Such touches," says **Verity**, "bring out the inner working of guilty thoughts. The prophecy of kingship is an echo of Macbeth's secret ambitions, and advances them a stage."

77. **Milton** remembered this line. *cf.* Par. host. 615.

81. *Corporal*, Corporeal. Both forms were in current Elizabethan use.

82. *As breath* ; **Coleridge** remarks on the appropriateness of the simile to a cold climate.

120. *That trusted home ;* "such trust, pushed to its logical consequence."—**Herford.** *home,* to the full.

130—142. This soliloquy shows Macbeth's supreme quality, *viz.*, his imaginativeness, which makes him so liable to the influences of superstition, and by which nemesis punishes him.—**Verity**.

140. **Verity** says : I think that single might mean 'absolute,' from the common meaning 'only, mere."

147. **Time and the hour,** *etc.*—*i.e.*, the roughest (=most unpleasant) day will come to an end at last and bring, early

or late, the appointed hour; that is, the hour which will see some particular matter done or decided.—**Verity.**

150—152. "The pains you have taken on my behalf are registered in the tables of my memory and every day I turn over the leaves of that record to peruse them."—**Deighton.**

154. The interim having weigh'd it: either 'let us, having weighed in the interval,' etc. or absolutely, 'the interval having weighed it,' *i.e.*, given us time to weigh it.—**Verity.**

ACT I—SCENE IV

Sargeaunt says, "Perhaps we may regard the stage direction to the next scene as editorial, and suppose that Malcolm comes to meet the king. Duncan has sent him to bring news of the execution of Cawdor. Again he is seen out of touch with those whom Ross has appointed commissioners to carry the execution out."

3-11. **Verity** remarks: "Perhaps in describing Cawdor's treachery, confession and dignity in meeting his punishment, Shakespeare had in mind the case of the Earl of Essex. (F). Essex was an exceptional figure in Elizabethan history, to whom Shakespeare refers very pointedly in *Henry V*."

11—14. "Throughout this play Shakespeare makes a splendid use of what is known as 'tragic irony' which consists in putting into the mouth of a speaker double-edged phrases of which the hidden meaning is only apparent to the spectators. In the present instance Duncan does not know, but the audience do, that his condemnation of Cawdor is just as applicable to Macbeth. And the force of this is heightened by the friendly greeting, 'Oh worthiest cousin.' **Chambers.**

21. **More is thy due, etc.** Your desert exceeds more than all I can do to repay you: more than all I can do is due to you—aye, even more than that.

37. *Establish our estate upon.* Settle the succession to the throne on. The nomination (which **Holinshed** puts later) just fits in it at this points, for the recent troubles would remind Duncan that an uncertain succession to the crown is an incentive to rebellion. It destroys Macbeth's hope that "chance may crown him."

39. *The Prince of Cumberland.* **Steevens** says: "The crown of Scotland was originally not hereditary. When a successor was declared in the lifetime of a king (as was often the case), the title of Prince of Cumberland was immediately bestowed on him as the mark of his designation. Cumberland was at that time held by Scotland from the crown of England as a fief."

45, 46. **Verity** remarks, "His departure (really to concert a plot with her) naturally carries our thoughts forward to Lady Macbeth (1. 5). The stages in the unfolding of a plot form an interesting study, especially in a tragedy like *Macbeth*, where the dramatic movement sweeps swiftly on, down a single straight channel, to destruction. There is no by-plot to divert the current. **Coleridge** characterised *Macbeth* as "the most rapid" in movement of all Shakespeare's plays."

ACT I—SCENE V

13-23. Verity remarks: In studying the characterisation of a play we learn much by noting what the *dramatis personæ* say of each other. Now no one knows Macbeth so intimately as his wife, and every line of this analysis of his character should be weighed (all illustrated). She knows his weaknesses thoroughly, but she has not relished his exteme imaginativeness, and therefore totally miscalculates the effect which acted crime will have on Macbeth's temperament.

As the speech tells much about Macbeth, so it tells us a good deal about her; for in analysing the character of others a speaker must reveal something of his own. She exemplifies in a high degree the influence of ambition as a

force that sustains the will to a certain point and overbears all scruples in self and others. Note that she never hints at personal animosity towards Duncan (though, as a matter of history, she had strong cause for it—see p. 137). It is Shakespeare's purpose to show that she acts solely for her husband's sake.

36. *The croaking raven.* She compares the messenger to a raven. "The messenger, says the servant, had hardly breath 'to make up his message'; to which the lady answers, mentally, that he may well want breath: such a message would add hoarseness to the raven. That even the bird, whose harsh voice is accustomed to predict calamities, could not croak the entrance of Duncan but in a note of unwonted harshness."—**Johnson.**

38-52. Lady Macbeth has been justly characterised as a woman of extreme nervous sensibility. Here she knows that she must "bend up" I. 7. 79) her will to the breaking-point, if she is not to fail in the middle of the work which now she means to do herself (*cf.* 65, 66), though afterwards she makes Macbeth do it. And this intense strain on her will, by the natural process of reaction, contributes greatly to her ultimate state (V.)—**Verity.**

53. *The all-hail hereafter.* It has been well observed that she speaks as if she had actually heard the Witch's saluatation (I. 3. 50) and not merely read the letter, in which the word hereafter was not used. But note that Macbeth may have written her more than one letter (54). —**Verity.**

In *Twelfth Night*, III. 3. 41 beguile the time has the more obvious sense 'to while away the time.'

65. *Provided for.* This is surely the ghastly euphemism in Shakespeare's works.

69. *We will speak further.* According to **Verity**: He can neither resist the dominating force of her personality nor yet "bend himself up" to definite assent. And so he half "saves his conscience" by deferring decision, as before (I. 3. 143. 144).

ACT—I SCENE VI

1-10. **Scot** says : "Shakespeare may have learned from the lips of some Highland chief in the court of King James about the mild climate of Inverness to which he makes special reference in *Macbeth*."

13-14. *God ild, i.e.*, yield='May God reward, repay you' ; an everyday form of thanks that got corrupted in various ways ; thus the 1st Folio here has .god-eyld. Duncan means : the love of his subjects sometimes occasions him "trouble" (11) but he accepts the "trouble" with thanks for the sake of the love : so Lady Macbeth and her husband should accept with thanks the "pains" and "trouble" which his visit occasions, and be grateful to him, for the sake of the feeling which his visit shows—namely, his great regard for them. Briefly, he would not be at their castle at all if he did not esteem them highly.—**Verity**.

20. *We rest your hermit.* We are your debtors still, bound to remember you in our prayers. Hermit here has the same notion as "beadsman," literally 'a man of prayer' (from A.S. biddan, 'to pray' and so 'one who prays for his benefactor', *e.g.*, as the inmate of an almshouse who prayed for the person that founded it.—**Verity**.

26. *In compt.* Under obligation to render an account—the metaphor of a steward of an estate who at the "audit" day has to give an account of receipts and expenditure to the owner.—**Verity**.

ACT I—SCENE VII

1. *If it were done, etc.* 'If the deed were done with when once it is executed, then the sooner it were executed the better. If the act of murder could catch in its toils (and so arrest) the evil results of murder, and thus in the moment of its completion secure successfully its object, so that just this blow might be the one thing necessary to do and the absolute conclusion of the matter in this life—just in this life, I say, this narrow bank in the mighty ocean of eternity

why, then, we would hazard the life to come with all its possibilities of punishment, and do the deed.—**Verity**.

8—10. *We but teach*. "We teach others to do as we have done, and are punished by our own example." —**Johnson**.

22. *Cherubin* (a plural). **Verity** points out, "Elsewhere in Shakespeare 'cheurbin' is the singular and 'cherubins' the plurul form. But in this line 'cherubins' would sound unpleasant, while the correct plural 'cherubin, was probably not known to Shakespeare. The general conception here of the Cherubin is due to passages in Scripture such as Psalm xviii. It was a mediaeval belief that the Cherubin had a peculiar power of vision, and wherever Shakespeare mentions them this power seems to be referred to. Thus here they are made to direct "the sightless couriers of the air".

25. *I have no spur, etc.* "I have nothing to stimulate me to the execution of my purpose but ambition, which is apt to overreach itself. (*Modern French*). **Verity** observes, "Macbeth has no motive other than ambition for murdering Duncan. He can plead neither private grievance nor public duty (the usual plea of regicides, *e.g.*, of Brutus in *Julius Cæsar*). For Duncan has lavished honours on Macbeth—so lately—and been a good king."

28. *On the other, i.e.*, side. The insertion of side would be wrong. It is omitted because the word has occurred in 26, and is still present to the speaker's eye of imagination ; and it is not essential to the meaning, because on the stage a gesture by the actor would make the point quite clear. Nor again does the metre require side, because Lady Macbeth's entrance compensates for the omission of a stressed syllable.—**Verity**.

59. *If we should fail ?* "Macbeth's opposition is beginning to weaken," observe **Verity**.

We fail. "Her famous reply," says **Verity**, "can be regarded in three ways : (1) as an exclamation of disdain at the very notion of their failing ; (2) as a surprised question, implying that she had never thought of failure ;

(3) as a quiet acceptance of the consequences of failure, implying 'well' if we fail, we do, and must bravely pay the penalty. The first rendering seems to me best ; it harmonises with her mocking, goading tones : she drives him into the deed by her scorn."—*Modern French*.

63. Holinshed, in his story of the murder of King Duff, describes how the King's two chamberlains were plied with "sundrie sort of drinks" by the murderer and his wife till they were sunk in "drunken sleep," and how Donwald slew them and laid guilt on them—**Verity.**

65-67. **Verity** says, "Two ideas are present to her : they shall not remember what happens—indeed, they shall not understand it at the time. Shakespeare has in view the old anatomical theory of the brain being divided into three sections, in each of which certain functions are discharged: thus 'reason' understands, and 'memory' retains the impression of, an incident. Here the notion is that the fumes of intoxication first overpower the 'memory,' the lowest-placed of the three sections, and then are drained up as though an alembic into the receptacle (receipt) of 'reason' and overcome it also."

ACT II, SCENE I

13—17. "Shakespeare," says **Verity**, "makes the wife, not the husband (as Holinshed mentions, the recipient of a gift; the change intensifies the 'irony' since she (as we know) has proved herself Duncan's deadlier foe. Indeed, it is all 'irony' (13—17)—Duncan's 'unusual pleasure,' his present 'measureless content,' his graciousness."

41. "Macbeth may be supposed to draw his dagger after this short line."—**Abbot.**

49, 50. *i.e.*, "over our hemisphere all action and motion seem to have ceased"—**Johnson.**

61. *Too cold breath gives chills* :—in talking about a deed one's ardour for it often cools : "strike while the iron is hot." Like Hamlet, Macbeth, if he is to act against his inclination, must act on impulse:—**Verity.**

Words......gives. "The First Folio," observes **Verity**, "has many similar cases, without rhyme, of an apparently singular verb after a plural subject; but for the most part, being unrhymed, they have been silently changed by editors. We may either (1) regard 'gives' as singular and explain the anomaly 'words......gives' by the theory that the verb is attracted to the sense='speech' or to the nearer noun 'breath' or (2) treat 'gives' as an example of the 'northern plural' in *s*. This question of the survival in Elizabethan English of the three plural infexions *es* or *s* (northern dialect of middle English), etc., (southern), is very difficult."

65. *Knell*; "alluding to the passing-bell, which was formerly tolled as the person was dying"—**Elwin**. The rhyme of this couplet marks the close not merely of the scene, but of Duncan's life. It has the effect of an epitaph.—**Verity**.

ACT II, SCENE II

"The scene is written with a pen of fire, and we seem eye-witnesses of the deed of death, though it is transacted off the stage."—**Boas.**

"And how," observes **Verity,** "appalling are the accessories of horror; the strange sounds and voices unaccounted for; the hoot of the owl without and cry of the crickets within, as if all nature were conscious of the crime; the sleeping servants—for sleep is a mystery, as of an intermediate state 'twixt life and death'; and the unconcious alarm of Duncan's son in the adjoining chamber (19—30). The 'note' of the whole tragedy is Terror, and in this scene Terror reaches its climax.

42—43. "The words are a terrible revelation of Macbeth's soul. The thoughts and temptations which have been moving in his mind and shaping it to a criminal purpose are cast up to the surface like seaweed in a storm. He is Glamis, Cawdor, King but he does not dare to say the word, though it is implied) and he has bought it with his peace of mind."—**Grierson.**

56. *Gild.* "Though there is no real resemblance between the colour of blood and that of gold, it is certain that gild with blood, was an expression not uncommon in the 16th century; and other phrases are found which have reference to the same comparison. Gold was popularly and very generally styled red. So we have 'golden blood.' II. 3,95"—**Nares**.

61-63. **Varity** points out, "A very similar passage has been found in the *Hippolytus* 723—726 of the Latin dramatist Seneca.

"It is quite likely that Shakespeare read some of Seneca's works in the original as a schoolboy, the tragedies being a favourite school-book. In any case they had been translated into English (1581) and had a great influence on the Elizabethan drama. But here, as so often in poetry, what counts is the expression of the thought, not the thought itself, which may occur to many minds. "The imagination of Macbeth dwells upon the conversion of the *universal green* into *one pervading red.*"—**Elwin**.

74. *Wake Duncan with thy knocking!* "addressed to the invisible knocker. Some editors would like to have it addressed to Duncan himself, and read: 'Wake, Duncan, with this knocking.'"

ACT II. SCENE III

"What may be called the Porter's scene," says **Verity**, "has been rejected by some critics as unauthentic. The following features stamp it, to my mind, as absolutely Shakespearean: (1) the relief it gives in relaxing the terrific tension; (2) the contrast which makes us feel in how abnormal a world of horror the action has been moving: this is brought home to us by the note of normal life which the scene reintroduces; (3) the 'irony'—for Macbeth's castle is a hell, and the man "devil-porters" (17) without knowing it. Moreover, (4) certain phrases have an indisputably Shakespearean ring, and (5) some scene is necessary to the structure of the play. Macbeth and his

wife must have time to remove the traces of his crime : and the 'knocking' was mentioned in the last scene. The principle involved in (1) and (2) is of course essentially Shakesperean.

"Note the allusions which throw light on the date of the play. In Elizabethan plays there is a considerable element of what has been called 'topical allusion'—allusion, that is, to topics and events of the time, literary customs, pastimes, fashions, current jokes, etc. It is generally through such characters as the Porter that this 'topial' element is introduced. The Porter occupied the gate-house (Lat. porta), like the 'Porter's lodge' of a college. The Porter in Henry VIII. v. 4. has a busy time with the crowd pushing into the courtyard."

30. *A joyful trouble* ; **Verity** observes that is "an instance of oxymoron, *i.e.*, the close combination of antithetic words. It is a figure of speech which *Milton*, with his classical tastes, uses more than Shakespeare ; *cf.* 'with wanton heed and giddy cunning,' *L'Allegro*, 141, and "In willing chains and sweet captivity," *Vacation Exercise*.

47. Macbeth's "concealment of the murder forms a stage of the action which falls into two different parts : the single effort which faces the first shock of discovery, and the very different strain required to meet the slowly gathering evidence of guilt. In the scene of the discovery Macbeth is perfectly at home : energetic action is needed, and he is dealing with men. His acted innocence appears to me better than his wife's ; Lady Macbeth goes near to suggesting a personal interest in the crime by her over-anxiety to disclaim it." – **Moulton**.

50. *The Lord's anointed temple.* "A blending of two scriptural phrases : 'the Lord's anointed (as in Richard III. IV. 4. 150) and 'ye are the temple of the living God' —**Herford**.

54. *A new Gorgon.* "There were three Gorgons, but the reference is to Medusa, whose head, fixed on Minerva's shield, turned all beholders to stone."—**Herford**.

77, 78. "A metaphorical comparison of this world vaulted by the sky, and robbed of its spirit and grace, with a vault or cellar from which the wine has been taken and the dregs only left."—**Edwin**.

99. "A metaphor must not be far-fetched nor dwell upon the details of a disgusting picture...There is but little, and that far-fetched, similarity between gold lace and blood or between bloody daggers and breech'd legs...Language so forced is only appropriate in the mouth of conscious murderer dissembling guilt."—**Abbot**.

107. "Sorrow in its first strength is motionless, and cannot express itself in words or tears."—**Clark & Wright**.

116. *Manly readiness*; "the equipment and mood of battle." – **Herford**.

125, 126. *Hath not yet lighted, i.e.*, not yet reached its final mark. Naturally Malcolm, Duncan's nominated but powerless successor (1. 4. 37-39), fears that he and Donalbain, as the next heir, will be the next victims. But their flight diverts suspicion from Macbeth to themselves (II. 4. 24-27) and leaves him free to claim the throne.—**Verity**.

ACT II, SCENE IV

"This scene," says Verity, "illustrates a very instructive feature of Shakespeare's dramatic method : his side-scenes. Hitherto we have been, as it were, amid the rush of tragic incidents ; now we view them retrospectively, some way off, as when one turns to look back on a plain ; we see them as they appear to the non-actors. And we learn the immediate after-effects (24-35) of the occurrences at which we have been present."

12. *Towering*. It is, according to Verity, "a term of falconry, used when the hawk soars spirally to a great height (her "pitch"), preparatory to swooping down, with closed wings, (technically "stooping"), on the prey. Shakespeare had a thorough knowledge of country life and sport, and is especially fond of hawking-terms, which he

uses with perfect accuracy. Here, for instance, he says her because in all breeds of hawks (the favourite English species for hawking was the peregrine falcon) the female bird is larger and more powerful than the male, and used for bigger game, *e.g.*, herons and ducks.

31. *Scone.* "The ancient royal city of Scone, supposed to have been the capital of the Pictish kingdom, lay two miles northward from the present town of Perth. It was the residence of the Scottish monarchs as early as the reign of Benneth M'Alpin, and there was a long series of kings crowned on the celebrated stone enclosed in a chair, now used as the seat of our sovereigns at coronations in Westminster Abbey................(to which) it was transferred by Edward I. in 1296"--**Knight.**

33. *Colme-kill.* Iona, one of the Western Isles ; the burial-place of the ancient kings of Scotland, constantly mentioned as such by Holinshed. The word is said to mean 'the cell or chapel of St. Columba,' by whom Christianity was first preached there in the sixth century (about A. D. 563).—**Verity.**

38. *Lest our old robes, etc.*, *i.e.*, lest the new order of things prove not so easy for us as the old, under Duncan. Macduff means that they will say "adieu" now, as no one can tell how matters are likely to go, and they may not meet again—**Verity.**

ACT III, SCENE I

28. *Twain* ; A. S. *Twegen.* "The A. S. forms show that the difference between two and twain was originally one of gender only."—**Skeat.**

33. *Strange invention* ; a glance at the reports of his own guilt which he knows are in circulation. Macbeth's repeated mention of "to-morrow" is blind to deceive Banquo and the others as the latter part of the scene proves. The plot against Banquo follows Holinshed's account closely.

55—57. A reminiscence of North's translation of Plutarch's *Lives*, which Shakespeare used in writing *Julius Caeser* (1600) and *Antony and Cleopatra*. North narrates how Antony consulted an Egyptian soothsayer who told him that his (Antony's Genius or "good-angel" was "afraid of his" (Caesar's), and became "fearful and timorous" when near the other. *Cf.* the scene in *Antony* and *Cleopatra, II. 3*, where Antony interrogates the soothsayer.—**Verity**.

71 *Come, fate, into the list, etc.* **Verity** observes, "Macbeth accepted what he thought the will of fate (as voiced by the Weird Sister) in relation to himself, but rebels against the will in relation to Banquo and his heirs, and challenges Fate to do her worst against him in deadly combat.

81. *Borne in hand.* Duped with false hopes. To bear in hand meant originally 'to maintain a statement, or charge against someone' (being a literal rendering of the legal words manutenere, 'to maintain a charge against') ; then 'to maintain a false statement,' etc., then 'to pretend, to delude, with false hopes, to deceive.' In the last senses it is a common Elizabethan phrase—**Verity**.

95. *The value file* ; the "catalogue (of hounds) graded according to their relative value."—**Herford.**

116. *Bloody distance.* "A hostility that must lead to bloodshed. O.F. destance, Lat. distantia, 'a standing apart'; hence 'separation'; hence 'discord, dispute, quarrel,' the earliest sense of distance in *E. Cf.* "to set at distance," *i.e.* 'at enmity,' in **Bacon's** *Essay Of Seditions*.

130. *The perfect spy o' the time* ; "probably—the result of perfect spying, the fit moment as determined by the closest scrutiny."—**Herford.**

134. *Rubs......botches.* It is, says **Verity**, "metaphors for imperfect and clumsy work. *Rubs* ; unevennesses, *e.g.* on a board not properly planed ; commonly used of obstacles on a bowling-green, such as an uneven bit of ground or a stone whence the figurative sense 'difficulty,' 'impediment', as in 'there's the rub' (*Hamlet, III. 1.65*)."

ACT III, SCENE II

8. *Why do you keep alone?* "Partnership in guilt has begun to produce its inevitable result, separation 'between the two who dare not meet each other's eyes'; and events widen the chasm more and more."—**Verity**.

20. *Our peace.* "The bliss which they had promised themselves in the attainment of the crown; for both there could have been no 'peacc' of mind while the prophecy of the witches remained unfulfilled. The jingling, ironical repetition of peace, in two senses, *vi.* 'peace of mind' and 'the peace of the grave,' is the same sort of grim jesting that we had in *II. 2. 56, 57.* Note too the antithesis ("peace") to 21, 22. The later Folios have "our place," one of those tame too-obvious changes. Note that such verbal repetition as peace...peace, though it may not please modern taste, is thoroughly Elizabethan."—**Verity**.

22. *Ecstasy.* "Restless ecstasy," says **Verity**, "describes Macbeth's state to the very life. Imagination, which might have restrained him from crime (*I. 3. 130-137*) by picturing vividly its results, now fills him with a fever of fear that drives him into new crimes.

30, 31. *Let your remembrance, etc.* **Verity** explains: "You have reminded me of my duty towards my guests; see that you do your share as hostess, especially as regards Banquo; treat him with particular distinction." Macbeth has not told her of the plot, but her hint in 38 encourages him to a half-confidence (43-46), which perhaps enables her to play her part better at the banquet-scene.

32, 33. Unsafe the while, etc.: 'during the time that we, in our insecurity, are forced to bathe our dignities in these streams of flattery to others (*i-e.*, influential men like Banquo) as the only way of keeping them in vigour (or unsoiled.' Macbeth expresses the insecurity of their new-won "honours" by likening them to something which must be invigorated by fresh water if it is to keep sound and wholesome. But the sense is forced, and the passage corrupt. "They must wash their kingly state in streams

of flattery lest it be soiled by rebellion or treason." —**Grierson**.

41. *Cloister'd ; within cloisters.* "The bats wheeling round the dim cloister of Queen's College, Cambridge, have frequently impressed on me the singular propriety of this epithet."—**Steevens**.

49. "The legal metaphor," observes **Verity**, "is the outcome of the image suggested by the speech (38). Macbeth likens himself to a man whose safety depends on the cancelling of some 'bond' ; the 'bond' here being that by which Banquo and Fleance hold their tenure of life. Editors compare Richard *III. IV. 4. 77, 78*, where Queen Margaret prays for Richard's death : 'Cancel his bond of life, dear God, I pray.' Shakespeare's partiality for legal terms and accuracy in using them indicate a considerable knowledge of law, which gave rise to the conjecture that as a youth he may have been in an attorney's office. But his use of technical terms in general is very correct. King Lear shows that his medical knowledge was great ; yet the medical profession have not claimed him as a doctor."

55. **Verity** remarks, "This striking thought has been traced back to *Agamemnon* of **Seneca**, whose philosophy, no less than his style, strongly affected the Elizabethan dramatists."

Dowden calls this line the motto of the play. "Macbeth is the tragedy of twilight and setting-in of thick darkness upon a human soul."

ACT III, SCENE III

"Banquo's fate," argue some critics, "is simply 'poetic justice' because he had acquiesced in the sovereignty of Macbeth whom he suspected to be guilty : as he took the risk (not to mention the shame) of so doing he must take the consequence."

9, 10. That is "all the other guests expected at the banquet, note, list. expectation, people expected ; abstract

for concrete, Banquo is a little late (11), as he anticipated (*III. I, 25—28*)."

18. "Tradition said," points out **Verity**, "that Fleance escaped into Wales, married a Welsh princess, and had a son Walter, who became Lord High Steward of Scotland, took the name of Walter Steward and was the ancestor of James I. But we are now told that Banquo and Fleance are simply fictitious persons, the invention of the old chroniclers."

ACT III, SCENE IV

14. *'Tis better, etc.*, "a daringly ungrammatical way of saying that the blood is better on the murderer's face than in Banquo's veins."—**Herford.**

25. *Saucy*—petty but vexatious. **Verity** observes that it is a colloquial use, as in our phrase 'safe out of the way.' So in *The Tempest, III, I. 21,* Miranda bids Ferdinand take a rest, as Prospero will not know : "He's safe for these three hours."

29. *Worm.* Snake ; reptiles (cf. IV. I. 8, 14—17) were considered venomous. Worm is used in *Antony and Cleopatra* of the asp (serpent) with which Cleopatra killed herself (V. 2. 243, 256). A.S. 'wyrm' means indifferently 'worm' and 'snake'.—**Verity.**

38. "That feast can only be considered as sold, not given, during which the entertainers omit such courtesies as may assure their guests that it is given with welcome." —**Dyce.**

'You do not bid the company welcome ; a feast is no feast—'tis a mere inn-meal—if during its course the host does not often assure his guests how glad he is to see them : mere eating can best be done at home : away from home people look for that ceremonial courtesy (such as the pledging of toasts which is a relish to the food and without which a gathering is cold and incomplete,'—**Verity.**

39, "It is a strange notion," observes **Verity**, "that Macbeth sees two ghosts—first Banquo's and then (92)

Duncan's or *vice versa*. Lines 50 and 81 (*cf. 27*) must refer to Banquo, and if a different ghost had been intended after 92 the fact would have been indicated by a stage-direction."

60. *This is the......dagger.* "This is another of your apparitions, like that visionary dagger! air drawn, drawn in the air, unreal, "**Verity**.

Purged the gentle weal—"Purged the state of violence and hence made it 'gentle'."—**Herford.**

83, 84. According to **Verity**, "critics note the resourcefulness and tacts of Lady Macbeth's method of dealing with her husband at this crisis. First she seeks by angry taunts to shame him into self-control; failing, she addresses him in an ordinary manner (a device that often succeeds with disordered brains)."

If trembling I inhabit. "Some interpret 'if I harbour' fear, from an old use of inhabit—'to give a hibitation to'; others 'if I stay at home skulking,' instead of going forth to the desert' (a strange, intransitive use of inhabit); others 'if I display trembling,' literally 'if I vest myself in trembling, if I put on trembling as an outward habit or garb' (a still stranger use of inhabit). The first explanation seems best. Probably, as a scholar points out to me, it is the real clue to "knowledge ill-inhabited" in *As you Like It*, III, 3."—**Verity.**

111. *Overcome us.* "Can such wonders as these pass over us without wonder, as a casual summer cloud passes over us?"—**Johnson**.

123. *Stones.* "Under which the murdered have been buried; *trees*: **Steevens** refers to the story in *Aeneid III.* of the bleeding tree that revealed the murder of Polydorus."—**Verity**.

124-126. *Augures and understood relations, etc.* "Divinations and perception of the inner connection of things and incidents, by means of magpies, jackdaws and rooks, have exposed murderers whose deeds were done in utmost secrecy."—**Verity**.

"To understand relations as an augur, is to know how those things relate to each other, which have no visible combination or dependence"—**Johnson**.

133, 135. All forces of evil appear now to be threatening Macbeth himself so that he "is being driven to that pitch of desperation in which suspense is torture, and knowledge of the worst a relief." It is due to this reason that he is engaged in his recourse to the witches.

144. "Looking back on the whole scene," says **Verity,** "we feel that, as has been well said, Macbeth has already touched the extreme of torture—and through that imagination which his wife had not taken into count !

"How far either of them is conscience-stricken by genuine remorse is a matter which each student must try to determine for himself. Fear is, at least, a considerable element of Macbeth's unrest. Still, the repentance is there: 'Macbeth retained enough of goodness to make him a haggard miserable criminal' though 'never enough to restrain him from a crime'."

ACT III, SCENE V

Sargeaunt observes : Macbeth is now in this position : as chief magistrate in Scotland and God's substitute, he is the person whose duty it is to suppress murder and witchcraft : yet, however reluctant, he is resolved to make use of both in conjunction.

15. *Acheron*—"Properly," says Verity, it is "one of the four rivers of the infernal world of classical mythology ; the 'stream of pain.' Shakespeare, however, seems to have regarded Acheron as a burning lake. Here it must be meant as a poetical title for some mountain-pool or lake (gloomy as the infernal Acheron), where the witches are wont to assemble, near Macbeth's castle."

23. *Corner*. **Verity** remarks, "Some interpret in its etymological sense 'horn' ; but there does not seem to be

any evidence for this use ; yet the word certainly suggests the classical cornua lunae. **Milton** imitates the line in Comus, 1017."

24. *There hangs, etc.* "Classical magic ascribed to the moon certain exudations (virus lunare) which, under the spells of the enchanter, were shed upon earthly objects."—**Herford.**

32. *Security, carelessness, false confidence*—the state of a man whose "hopes" make him deaf to the warnings alike of wisdom, conscience, and fear—**Verity.**

ACT III SCENE VI

This is "another of the valuable side-scenes of comment and preparation." It is designed to show how the murder of Banquo is working to Macbeth's own destruction. All the great nobles are now alarmed for themselves. We come to know that "Macduff has fled to England, and the "suffering country" but waits for its deliverer. As regards the dramatic structure, observes **Verity**, "the scene serves to bridge the interval between the appearance of the witches and Macbeth's promised visit to them."

8. *Who cannot want the thought...* ? Who can fail to think ? The double negative form has the same intensive force as in the cases of two negatives or of a negative after some verb which implies negation. Strictly, Lennox should have said who cannot have the thought or who can want [=lack] the thought. But the combination of the two forms of expression is perfectly clear in its emphasis. This tendency to repeat a negative is a general principle of language.—**Verity.**

35. *Free, remove.* "He is thinking of the Murderer who appeared at Macbeth's banquet to report Banquo's assassination."

ACT IV, SCENE I

Sargeaunt observes : In the next scene the witches are waiting for Hecate in the pit of Acheron, while they prepare

their charms according to her instruction. We have no mere "exemplification of the rites of witchcraft," if by that it is meant to say that the witches are only a side-show, or a mere heightening of the picturesque. There is nothing here but what is dramatically essential. It seems to be generally overlooked that Macbeth now first meets these women as their king, and that his degradation is seen in the activities they perform to lead him to his destruction.

3. *Harpier*—It is "a fancy name invented as suggesting by its sound association of being ravenous, evil disposed, and talon-clawed"—**Nicholson.**

8. *Venom*—Poison. Note that, "Shakespeare several times speaks of toads as venomous." Lee points out that many of the "ingredients" (34) come from the description of Medea's caldron in Ovid's Metamorphoses."

23. *Mummy*—It is "a preparation for magical purposes, made from dead bodies"—**Schmidt**. Another critic notes that "Egyptian mummy or what passed for it, was formerly a regular part of the Materia Medica."

44. "It is a very ancient superstition that all sudden pains of the body, ;which could not naturally be accounted for, were presages of something that was shortly to happen"—**Steevens.**

50-61. *I conjure you, etc.* "Macbeth," says Verity, "cares nothing for anybody or anything : his desire for knowledge must be gratified at all costs."

68. *The Apparitions.* "The 'armed head' represents symbolically Macbeth's own, struck off by Macduff (see stage-direction V. 8. 53) ; the 'bloody child' represents Macduff (see V. 8. 15) ; the 'child crowned with a tree in his hand' represents Malcolm, who gives the order to the soldiers to cut down the boughs of Birnam Wood (V. 4. 4)"—**Herford.**

70-72. **Verity** observes that an injunction to silence is customary in all scenes of incantation ; and it was an

ancient belief that spirits summoned to earth by means of spells were reluctant to answer questions and eager to be "dismissed."

71-94. "Holinshed describes how 'certaine wizzards' told Macbeth that he 'ought to take heed of Macduffe'; and how another time 'a witch' told him that 'he should never be slaine with man borne of anie woman, nor vanquished till the wood of Bernane came to the castell of Dunsinane, which prophecy made him 'put all fear out of his heart...and doo manie outragious things.' The rhyme in the speeches of the Apparitions gives them the effect of riddles."—**Verity.**

88-89. *Round.* It is synonymous to top—used with the same figurative notion that 'crown' often bears, *viz.*, 'summit,' culminating point. "Perhaps," says **Verity**, round is intended to suggest the lower, encircling part of the crown, and top the upper, ornamental part."

97. *Rebellion's head.* It is, "another of Theobald s fine corrections. Rebellion is precisely what a usurper would fear. Some think that the metaphor may be suggested to Macbeth by the 'armed head' he has lately beheld. To retain dead and interpret it of Banquo is very far-fetched."

106. *Noise.* Note that the "Elizabethan writers often use noise for 'music' and it is thought to have that sense here."

111. *A show of eight kings.* "Banquo is reputed to have been an ancestor of the Stuarts. Walter Stuart married the grand-daughter of Robert Bruce, and their son was Robert II. His descendants, who sat upon the throne, were Robert III, and the six kings called James. Mary, daughter of James V., is omitted in the vision, as the Witches' prophecy related only to kings."—**Herford**. The purpose of the "show," says Verity, "is to introduce the famous complimentary reference (120, 121) to the accession of King James. Shakespeare may have had in mind an official proclamation (extant) exhibiting the pedigree of the

Stuarts and James's descent from Banquo."—**Shakespeare's England.**

117. *The crack of doom.* **Verity** observes, "The thunder-peal of the day of judgment. *Cf.* passages descriptive of the judgment-day in *The Revelation*, *e.g.*, *in XI. 19, XVI, 18.* Crack was often applied to a loud noise, *e.g.*, the roar of cannon (I. 2. 37), a thunder clap, trumpet-blast. Some think (less probably) that "the crack of doom" here means the last trump. The verse "could not fail to be a most acceptable prediction to King James," but the course of history gave it a grim "irony."

119. "Mirrors and crystals, and glasses," says **Verity**, so cut as to produce an illusion when looked into, play an important part in magic. By this use of the 'glass' Shakespeare suggests to the imagination the long line of other kings whom it would have been tedious to bring on the stage."

121. The ball is "the globe," part of the king's insignia. In 1542 Henry VIII took the title of King of Ireland. When James VI of Scotland came to the English throne the three sceptres were united. Thus he alone of eight could carry "two-fold balls and treble sceptres."—**Herford.**

148. *The firstlings.* "It means the first product of, signifying here the first thoughts or deeds of." Firstling means literally 'the first of its kind to be produced......the first product.'

ACT VI, SCENE II

"This scene is important as it brings out the utter savagery of Macbeth. Its tone of 'domestic calm is a contrast.' The role of the child is of pure pathos. It is a pathos which clings about all Shakespeare's portraits of children."—**Symons.**

1. "Macduff's flight," observes **Verity,** "appears at first sight to merit his wife's censure. But we see later that he acted from patriotic motives. He felt that the time was

ripe for rebellion and that he must go to England to summon Malcolm."

9. *The natural touch.* It implies natural affection, that is, "for his wife and children." Note that 'touch' in Shakespeare sometimes means 'sensation, feeling,' the context defining the particular feeling—here affection.

19. *Know ourselves,* "Macduff." says **Verity**, "had been forced by national circumstances to act in away which made him appear a "traitor" to his family, yet he did not feel himself to be "traitor."

19, 20. *When we hold rumour, etc.*; when we interpret every report in the light of (or 'under the influence of') our fears, yet cannot define those fears and say what it is that we dread.

"On the eve of some national crisis, like a revolution, the atmosphere is charged with a vague alarm, and this condition colours men's view of everything and makes them interpret unfavourably every fresh rumour."—**Verity.**

22. *Each way and move.* "It literally means 'every way and with every movement' that is, 'in every direction, according to the current.' This is the picture of a "rudderless ship drifting about at the sport of waves. Shakespeare does not elsewhere use move=movement. No change, such as 'And each way move,' is wanted."

35. *Pitfall.* "Usually for catching animals, not birds. *Gin*, short for engine; *lit.* 'Something ingeniously made,' hence 'a trap, a snare.'—**Verity.**

ACT IV, SCENE III

The dramatic theme moves towards the "great avengement, which," says **Verity**, "is to fall in different ways on husband and wife in accordance with the different operation of crime in their lives." Now, "to bring about the avengement suddenly would violate probability" because "rebellion takes time to work." It is **necessary that the climax** should be led up to gradually; "and this long scene, as it were, fills

the period in which the storm clouds gather. Time-illusion is one of the essentials of dramatic construction." There is a terrible note of "irony" which springs from Macduff's ignorance of the fate of his own wife and children.

19, 20. *A good and virtuous nature, etc.*, "a good mind may recede from goodness in the execution of a royal commission (office order)"—**Johnson.**

22. *The brightest, Lucifer* (Satan); of whom "bright" (or an equivalent) is essentially the **Miltonic** description, based on mediaeval tradition ; *cf.* indeed the name Lucifer ('light-bringer')—**Verity.**

24. *My hopes,—"i.e.*, hope of welcome from Malcolm, who withholds it by distrust, aroused by Macduff's abandonment of wife and children."—**Herford.**

33. *Wear thou thy wrongs*—"Enjoy the fruits of your crimes, enjoy your ill-got gains, the person addressed being 'tyranny', not the remoter noun 'poor country'. The metaphor perhaps is 'dress yourself out in your ill-gained plumes'."

34. *The title i.e.*, the title (=claim) you put forward to them."—**Verity.**

81. *Summer-seeming lust.* Literally it means 'lust that seems like a summer,' hence 'that may be likened to a summer,' *i.e.*, in shortness of duration. The shortlived plant lust is contrasted with the deep-rooted avarice, which, like some tree, grows stronger with age. The other obvious point of likeness between "lust" and "summer" may also be implied.—**Verity.**

80, 84. *Foisons.* It means plenty, abdunance, and implies "not harvests alone but wealth in general, resources. *Mere,* Very absolutely. Malcolm's own wealth will be enough to satisfy his avarice, however great, without his needing to filch other people's possessions."

106. *Died.* That is, prepared herself for death by a life that was dead to the vanities of the world. The reference is to self-mortification.

131, 132. *And the chance of goodness, etc.* Meaning, "and may the future of **virtue be in accordance** with the justice of our cause : we, he means, represent the cause of goodness, and may that cause prevail in proportion to its justice." **Verity** observes that, in his opinion, "chance means simply 'fortune' : how goodness fares in the struggle, whether well or ill : and that goodness means 'virtue, right,' exactly as in Macduff's speech (33), which may linger unconsciously in Malcolm's thoughts." Some critics interpret it as 'our chance of success.' "But that," observes **Verity**, "is not a Shakespearean sense, nor is it clear that goodness was ever used='success'. Its nearest meaning (very rare) is 'general prosperity.' The King referred to is Edward the Confessor. The description of Edward's gifts of healing and prophecy, and of his bequeathing his successor the power of 'touching,' is due to Holinshed. Shakespeare, however, really means the passage to be another compliment to King James, and has obviously gone out of his way to introduce it. The gift of 'virtue' was thought to come from the unction of a monarch's hands at his coronation with the consecrated oil—the 'balm' of Richard."

148. *Hanging a golden stamp.* Each person touched received a gold coin, in King Jame's time an "angel" worth 10*s*. ; afterwards a gold medal was substituted."—**Verity**.

155. *My countryman*—Judging by Ross's dress—**Steevens**.

191. *The general cause.* That is, "the public weal. A **fee-grief** ; a sorrow peculiar to one person" : literally "a grief held 'in fee' by a single owner."—**Herford**.

121. *On the quarry of.* **Verity** observes : The literal idea is 'on top of the heap made by the bodies of these slaughtered deer.' Ross means that to describe how it all was done would be to kill Macduff himself and thus increase the heap of slain by another body. *Cf.* the close of Hamlet v. 2, where the Fortinbras, pointing to the dead bodies of

Hamlet and the others, speaks of them as, "this quarry." This, according to Verity, is "probably Shakespeare had in mind a free rendering of Seneca's line which occurs in Florio's translation of **Montaigne's** Essays, 1. 2. :

'Light cares can freely speake,

Great cares heart rather breake." (F.) Gonzalo's picture of an ideal 'commonwealth' in *The Tempest*, II. I. 147—164, is from **Montaigne**, who influenced Elizabethan writers much."

206. "The tremendous emotion of Macduff's repeated inquiry is one of the most moving things in the play. The calamity is so great that he is unable to take in its whole range at once."—**Scrimgeour**.

211. *He has no children, i.e.,* "Malcolm ; a father would not offer vain comfort to a father at such a moment."

234. *Put on*—"Incite, encourage. *Their instruments. i.e.,* himself and his supperters, who are to be the instruments by which Providence executes vengeance on Macbeth. —**Verity**.

ACT V, SCENE

4. *When into the field.* Took the field, *i.e.,* at the outset of the troubles in his kingdom ; now he has had to fall back on his castle.

20. *Staud close, i.e.,* "keep concealed ; Lady Macbeth might chance to wake and then discover that she was being watched."

25. *Their sense is shut*—"the 1st Folio has 'are,' probably a mistaken repetition of 'are' just above. Some consider the plural verb attracted to the plural notion "eyes."

Shakespeare's doctors are few. The one we know best is this. Cerimon (Pericles) and Cornelius (Cymbeline) are alike. Shakespeare's elder daughter married a well-known Stratford doctor (Hall.).

50. *Arabia*—"traditionally in poetry the land of perfumes and spices."

64. *Even so?*—"An exclamation of surprise at her revelation of the second crime."

ACT V, SCENE II

"The rest of the play," says **Verity**, "is occupied with Macbeth's actual downfall. In its main outlines the story follows Holinshed."

5. *The mortified man*—even the ascetic, dead to all passions, such as the feelings of revenge that burn in Malcolm and Macduff. Most editors take mortified figuratively, not in the literal (and very rare) sense 'dead,' 'slain'. *Cf. Love's Labour's Lost,* I. I. 28—31, where the courtier Dumain, withdrawing from the world, says to the king:

"My loving lord, Dumain is mortified:
...To love, to wealth, to pomp, I pine and die."

So in an old play *Monsieur D'Olive* (1606), "He like a mortified hermit sits."

15, 16. *He cannot buckle, etc.*—"he cannot keep his cause in hand; his side or party is so deranged ("distemper'd) as to be beyond his control: hence the desertion of his nominal followers."

23. *Pester'd troubled.* The line describes Macbeth's madness (*cf.* 13), under metaphor like 'mentally unhinged.'

24, 25. *When all that is within him, etc.*; "when all the faculties of the mind are employed in self-condemnation" —**Johnson.**

27-29. *Meet we the medicine of, etc.*—"Let us go to meet the physician (Malcolm) who comes to cure the nation's sickness, and with him let us shed every drop of our blood to purge our country of the tyrant. For medicine='physcian'."

ACT V, SCENE III

8. *Epicures*—"Men given to luxury of all kinds. A hardy northerner might well speak thus of the more iuxurious nation south of the Tweed. Shakespeare obviously had in mind passages in Holinshed that speak of "those superfluities which came into the realme of Scotland with the Englishmen"—such as "fine fare" and "English likerous delicates"—**Steevens.**

15. *Lily-liver'd*—"So we find *milk-livered* and *white-livered*. The liver was regarded as the seat of courage, and a white, bloodless liver as a sign of cowardice. The idea is part of the belief that the redness of the blood is a test of courage : so a coward is called a '*milksop*,' *i.e.*, '*white-livered*.' As with many old medical notions, there is an element of truth in this belief ; for courage generally goes with strength, and strength depends on the quality of the blood." —**Verity.**

22. *My way of life*—The course of my life. "To say that the course of one's life has reached the downward point (fallen), has declined into the autmn-stage" observes Verity "is surely a natural mode of expression. The metaphor in 'way' is continued in 'accompany.' **Johnson's** famous emendation 'my way of iife' is attractive at first sight because of the vivid antithesis it yields between spring-time and autumn ('the sear, the yellow leaf') ; and of course the figurative use of May, to denote the spring-time of life, is very common. But it is a sentimental phrase that hardly fits the grim, weary Macbeth ; and there is no need for any change."

33. *Give me my armour.* "The Setons of Touch were (and are stlll) hereditary armour-bearers to the kings of Scotland ; there is thus a peculiar fitness in the choice of this name."

40. *Minister to a mind diseased*—This also seems to be from **Seneca** ; *cf.* the Hercules Furnes.

54. *Pull't off*, *i.e*, his armour, which in his disturbed state he puts on and off—**Herford.**

ACT V, SCENE IV

14, 15. *Let our just censures.* "Older and more cautious than Malcolm, Macduff hints that a soldier's part is to make every preparation and not fall into over-confidence. 'To judge aright' (he says), 'let us wait for the issue, which will show how things really are. He and old Siward (16—21) speak with some ambiguity to avoid seeming to rebuke the young prince whom they hope to see soon on the throne."

18. *What......we have, and what we owe*; "what we have won and what we have lost ; our gains and our penalties (in the case of defeat). Put colloquially his meaning is—we shall soon know how we stand."

The rhyme gives the effect of elderly moralising, as in II. 4. 40. 41.

19. *Thoughts speculative.* "Surmise may express its uncertain hope, but the conflict is the arbitrator that decides."—**Verity.**

ACT V, SCENE V.

17. *She should have died hereafter.* "This is all he has to say : a callous remark on the inopportuneness of her death ; and she was once his 'dearest partner of greatness' his 'dearest love'."—**Verity.**

19—21. *To-morrow and to-morrow...Creeps etc.* "One morrow after another creeps on in this trivial daily progress, till the last word is reached and the Book of Time closed."

Recorded time. "While Time lasts a record of it is kept and the record will only cease when Time itself ceases, merged in Eternity. We must paraphrase freely as above, or 'to the last letter of volume of Time's record."

23. *Dusty death.* "Earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust (The Burial of the Dead)."

28. *Signifying nothing.* "Not simply bad, but absolutely nothing : such is the final conclusion to which all his

and her schemes and ambitions and crimes have brought him; the last word of pessimism. **Dr. Ward** says, that stories similar to this of the moving wood have been found in Arabic legend and elsewhere."

42. *Pull in.* "Rein in, restrain. Macbeth had permitted his courage (like a fiery horse) to carry him to the brink of a precipice, but, seeing his danger, resolves to check that confidence to which he had given the reign before."

52. *Harness.* Armour: "Much of the rhyme in this last Act is due to the number of short scenes, the divisions between which could not be indicated in any other way on the Elizabethan stage than by rhymed couplets. Moreover, here the rhyme in itself has a fine effect of melodramatic defiance and desperation."—**Verity.**

ACT V—SCENE VII

1-4 "At the last Macbeth 'fights not like Bellona's bridegroom, but with a wild and animal clinging to life.' In the degradation of his nature through crime, his courage has degenerated into a 'dull ferocity.' Scenes of combat and wrestling were evidently very popular with Elizabethan audiences."—**Verity**.

2. *The course.* **Verity** observes, "The technical term in bear-baiting for the onset of dogs. Shakespeare refers to this cruel pastime several times."

3, 4. "Deceived in one of the prophecies which he thought so 'good' (IV.I. 96), he falls back on the other, with the true desperation and superstition of the gambler." —**Verity.**

ACT V, SCENE VIII

15. "The untimely birth of Macduff is shown to be a feature which in Germanic mythology invariably indicates heroic strength."—**Ward.**

18. *My better part of man.* **Verity** tells us, "'Some interpret 'the better part of my soul' or 'the mind.' So

here I think Macbeth means 'my very soul.' **Milton** remembered this scene when he wrote *Paradise Lost*, XI. 494-498."

75. *At Scone.* "The historical date Macbeth's defeat by Siward (either the maternal uncle or cousin of Malcolm) is July 24, 1054. Siward's victory "enabled him to establish Malcolm as king of Cumbria......Macbeth still maintained his power north of the Mounth, but three years later, after the death of Siward, Malcolm himself succeeded in defeating and slaying Macbeth at Lumphanan in Mar on 5 Aug. 1057."—*Dict of Biog.* Shakespeare, therefore, has again combined two campaigns. Malcolm, commonly called Malcolm Canmore, crowned 1057, was the first great King of Scotland. He died 1093. The clouds have lifted at last, and the tragedy closes with the hope that under the rule of its young king, dawn of a happier era for Scotland is close at hand. The end of Macbeth is very similar to that of Hamlet, where the sceptre for which Hamlet himself was ill-fitted passes into the strong grasp of "young Fortinbras," at Hamlet's own bequest. Even King Lear ends on the notes of duty and optimism : that the world's work must go forward, and that there are men to do it. The quiet closes of Shakespeare's tragedies are a notable point. "Like the Greeks, he ends his plays, not with the crash of catrastrophe, but...with a slight continuation of the action which (unites) the eddying of the play to the vest flow of the river of continuous life." Contrast the method of making the curtain fall or the denouement. The difference is that between true tragedy and melodrama."—**Verity.**

SECTION IX

IMPORTANT QUESTIONS WITH ANSWERS

Q. 1. "Shakespeare is the only biographer of Shakespeare." Comment and give an estimate of Shakespeare in the light of this statement.

Ans. Sidney Lee observes that **Emerson's** famous aphorism—'Shakespeare is the only biographer of Shakespeare'—seems until it be submitted to a radical qualification to rest on a profound misapprehension. An unquestionable characteristic of Shakespeare's art is its impersonality. The plain and positive references in the plays to Shakespeare's personal experiences either at Stratford-on-Avon or in London are rare and fragmentary, and nowhere else can we point with confidence to any autobiographic revelations.

Proceeding further, **Lee** says, "As a dramatist Shakespeare lay under the obligation of investing a great crowd o' characters with all phases of sentiment and passion, and no critical test has yet been found whereby to disentangle Shakespeare's persons, feelings or opinions from those which he imputes to the creatures of his dramatic world. It was contrary to Shakespeare's dramatic aim to label or catalogue in drama his private sympathies or antipathies. The most psychological of English poets and a dramatic artist of no mean order, **Robert Browning** bluntly declared that Shakespeare 'ne'er so little' at any point in his work 'left his bosom's gate a jar.' Even in the *Sonnets* lyric emotion seems to Browning to be transfused by dramatic instinct. It is possible to deduce from his plays a broad practical philosophy which is alive with an active moral sense. But we seek in vain for any self-evident revelation of personal experience of emotion or pasion."

Lee Claims, "Many forces went to the making of Shakespeare's mighty achievement. His national affinities lie on the surface. A love of his own country and a confident faith in its destiny find exalted expression in his work. Especially did he interpret to perfection the humour peculiar to his race.

His drama was cast in a mould which English predecessors had invented. But he is free of all taint and insularity. His lot was thrown in the full current of the intellectual and artistic movement known as the Renaissance, which taking its rise in Itlay of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, was in his lifetime still active in every country of Western Europe. He shared in the great common stock of thought and aspiration—in the certain hope of intellectual enfranchisement and in the enthusiastic recognition of the beauty of the world and humanity—to which his epoch authors of all countries under the sway of the Renaissance enjoyed access.

"Like all great poets," Continues *Lee*, "Shakespeare was not merely gifted with a supreme capacity for observing what was passing about him in nature and human life, but he was endowed with the rare power of assimilating with rapidity the fruits of reading. Literary study rendered his imagination the more productive and robust. His genius caught light and heat from much foreign as well as domestic literature. But he had the faculty of transmuting in the crucible of his mind the thought and style of others into new substance of an unprecedented richness. His mind may best be likened to a highly sensitised photographic plate, which need only be exposed for however brief a period to nything in life or literature, in order to receive upon its surface the firm outline of a picture which could be developed and reproduced at will. If Shakespeare's mind came in contact in an alehouse with a burly, good-humoured toper, the conception of a Flastaff found instantaneous admission to his brain. The character had revealed itself to him in most of its involutions, as quickly as his eye caught sight of its external form, and his ear caught the sound of the voice. Books offered Shakespeare the same opportunity of realising human life and experience. A hurried perusal of an Italian story of a Jew in Venice conveyed to him the mental picture of Shylock, with all his racial temperament in energetic action, and all the background of Venetian scenery and society accurately defined. A few hours spent over Plutarch's *Lives* brought into being in Shakespeare's brain the true aspects of Roman character and Roman

inspiration. Whencesoever the external impressions came, whether from the world of books or the world of living men, the same mental process was at work, the same visualising instinct which made the thing, which he saw or read of, a living and a lasting reality.

Lee remarks that No analysis of the final fruits of Shakespeare's genius can be adequate. "In knowledge of human character, in perception and portrayal of the workings of passion, in wealth of humour, in fertility of fancy, and in soundness of judgment, he has no rival. It is true of him, as of no other writer, that his language and versification adapt themselves to every phase of sentiment, and sound every note in the scale of felicity. Some defects are to be acknowledged, but they sink into insignificance when they are measured by the magnitude of his achievement. Sudden transitions, elliptical expressions, mixed metaphors, verbal quibbles, and fantastic conceits at times create an atmosphere of obscurity. The student is perplexed, too, by obsolete words and by some hopelessly corrupt readings. But when the whole of Shakespeare's vast work is scrutinised with due attention, the glow of his imagination is seen to leave few passages wholly unillumined. Some of his plots are hastily constructed and inconsistently developed but the intensity of the iuterest with which he contrives to invest the personality of his heroes and heroines triumphs over halting or digressive treatment of the story in which they have their being. Although he was versed in the technicalities of stagecraft, he occasionally disregarded its elementary conditions. The success of his presentiments of human life and character depended indeed little on his manipulation of theatrical machinery. His unassailable supremacy springs from the versatile working of his intellect and imagination, by virtue of which his pen limned with unerring precision almost every gradation of thought and emotion that animates the living stage of the world."

Shakespeare, as **Hazlitt** suggested, ultimately came to know how human faculty and feeling would develop in any conceivable change of fortune on the highways of life. His great characters give voice to thought or passion with an

individuality and a naturalness that commonly rouse in the intelligent playgoer and reader the illusion that they are overhearing men and women speak unpremeditatingly among themselves, rather than that they are reading written speeches or hearing written speeches recited. The more closely the words are studied, the complete the illusion grows. Creatures of the imagination—fairies, ghosts, witches—are delineated with a like potency, and the reader or spectator feels instinctively that these supernatural entities could not speak, feel or act otherwise than Shakespeare represents them. The creative power of poetry was never manifested to such effect as in the corporeal semblances in which Shakespeare clad the spirits of the air.

Lee concludes, "So mighty a faculty sets at naught the common limitations of nationality, and in every quarter of the globe, to which civilised life has penetrated, Shakespeare's power is recognised. All the world over, language is applied to his creations that ordinarily applies to beings of flesh and blood. Hamlet and Othello, Lear and Macbeth, Falstaff and Shylock, Brutus and Romeo, Ariel and Caliban are studied in almost every civilised tongue as if they were historic personalities, and the chief of the impressive phrases that fall from their lips are rooted in the speech of civilised humanity. To Shakespeare the intellect of the world, speaking in divers accents, applies with one accord his own words. 'How noble is reason ! how infinite is faculty ! in apprehension how like a god ! The prince of French romancers, the elder Dumas, set the English dramatist next to God in the cosmic system: 'After God,' wrote Dumas, 'Shakespeare has created most'."

Q. 2. Compare *Macbeth* with *Hamlet*.

Ans. Prof. Bradley observes, "*Macbeth*, it is probable, was the last-written of the four great tragedies, and immediately preceded *Antony and Cleopatra*. In that play Shakespeare's final style appears for the first time completely formed, and the transition to this style is much more decidedly visible in *Macbeth* than in *King Lear*. Yet in certain respects Macbeth recalls *Hamlet* rather than

Othello or *King Lear*. In the heroes of both plays the passage from thought to a critical resolution and action is difficult, and excites the keenest interest. In neither play, as in *Othello* and *King Lear*, is painful pathos one of the main effects. Evil, again, though it shows in Macbeth a prodigious energy, is not the icy or stony inhumanity of Iago or Goneril; and no longer restricts the action to purely human agencies, as in the two preceding tragedies; portents once more fill the heavens, ghosts rise from their graves, an unearthly light flickers about the head of the doomed man. The special popularity of *Hamlet* and *Macbeth* is due in part to some of these common characteristics, notably to the fascination of the supernatural, the absence of characters which horrify and repel and yet are destitute of grandeur. The reader who looks unwillingly at Iago gazes at Lady Macbeth in awe, because though she is dreadful she is also sublime. The whole tragedy is sublime.

In this, however, and in other respects, Macbeth makes an impression quite different from that of Hamlet. The dimensions of the principal characters, the rate of movement in the action, the supernatural effect, the style, the versification, are all changed; and they are all changed in much the same manner. In many parts of *Macbeth* there is in the language a peculiar compression, pregnancy, energy, even violence; the harmonious grace almost disappeared. The chief characters, built on a scale at least as large as that of Othello, seem to attain at times an almost superhuman stature. The diction has in places a huge and rugged grandeur, which degenerates here and there into tumidity. The solemn majesty of the royal Ghost in Hamlet, appearing in armour and standing silent in the moonlight, is exchanged for shapes of horror, dimly seen in the murky air or revealed by the glare of the caldron fire in a dark cavern, or for the ghastly face of Banquo badged with blood and staring with blank eyes. The other three tragedies all open with conversations which lead into the action; here the action bursts into wild life amidst the sounds of a thunderstorm and the echoes of a distant battle. It hurries through seven very brief scenes of mounting suspense to a terrible

crisis, which is reached, in the murder of Duncan, at the beginning of the Second Act. Pausing a moment and changing its shape, it hastes again with scarcely diminished speed to fresh horrors. And even when the speed of the outward action is slackened, the same effect is continued in another form ; we are shown a soul tortured by an agony which admits not a moment's repose, and rushing in frenzy towards its doom. Macbeth is very much shorter than the other three tragedies, but our experience in traversing it is so crowded and intense that it leaves an impression not of brevity but of speed. It is the most vehement, the most concentrated, perhaps we may say the most tremendous, of the tragedies.

Q. 3. "Shakespeare's *Macbeth* has a very strong tone." Comment.

Ans. **Prof. Bradley** says, "A Shakespearean tragedy, as a rule, has special tone or atmosphere of its own, quite perceptible, however difficult to describe. The effect of this atmosphere is marked with unusual strength in *Macbeth*. It is due to a variety of influences, so that, acting and reacting, they form a whole ; and the desolation of the blasted heath, the design of the Witches, the guilt in the hero's soul, the darkness of the night, seen to emanate from one and the same source. This effect is strengthened by a multitude of small touches, which at the moment may be little noticed but still leave their mark on the imagination. We may approach the consideration of the characters and the action by distinguishing some of the ingredients of this general effect." For more matter consult Introduction.

Q. 4. "Darkness broods over *Macbeth*." Explain.

Ans. According to Professor **Bradley**, "Darkness, we may even say blackness, broods over this tragedy. It is remarkable that almost all the scenes which at once recur to memory take place either at night or in some dark spot. The vision of the dagger, the murder of Duncan, the murder of Banquo, the sleep-walking of Lady Macbeth, all come in night-scenes. The Witches' dance in the thick air of a storm or, 'black and midnight hags,' receive Macbeth

in a cavern. The blackness of night is to the hero a thing of fear, even of horror ; and that which he feels becomes the spirit of the play. The faint glimmerings of the western sky at twilight are here menacing : it is the hour when the traveller hastens to reach safety in his inn, and when Banquo rides homeward to meet his assassins ; the hour when 'light thickens,' when the wolf begins to howl, and the owl to scream, and withered murder steals forth to his work. Macbeth bids the stars hide their fires that his 'black' desires may be concealed ; Lady Macbeth calls on thick night to come, palled in the dunnest smoke of hell. The moon is down and no stars shine when Banquo, dreading the dreams of the coming night, goes unwillingly to bed, and leaves Macbeth to wait for the summons of the little bell. When the next day should dawn, its light is 'strangled,' and 'darkness does the face of earth entomb.' In the whole drama the sun seems to shine only twice ; first in the beautiful but ironical passage where Duncan sees the swallows flitting round the castle of death ; and, afterwards, when at the close the avenging army gathers to rid the earth of its shame. Of the many slighter touches which deepen this effect I notice only one. The failure of nature in Lady Macbeth is marked by her fear of darkness ; 'she has light by her continually.' And in the one phrase of fear that escapes her lips even in sleep, it is of the darkness of the place of torment that she speaks.

Q. 5. "*Macbeth* leaves a decided impression of colour over the mind." Discuss.

Ans. Bradley says, "The atmosphere of *Macbeth*, however, is not that of unrelieved blackness. On the contrary, as compared with *King Lear* and its cold dim gloom, *Macbeth* leaves a decided impression of colour ; it is really the impression of a black night broken by flashes of light and colour, sometimes vivid and even glaring. They are the lights and colours of the thunderstorm in the first scene ; of the dagger hanging before Macbeth's eyes and glittering alone in the midnight air ; of the torch borne by the servant when he and his lord come upon Banquo crossing the castle-court to his room ; of the torch, again, which

Fleance carried to light his father to death, and which was dashed out by one of the murderers; of the Ghost and the blanced cheeks of Macbeth; of the flames beneath the boiling caldron from which the apparitions in the cavern rose; of the taper which showed to the Doctor and Gentlewoman the wasted face and blank eyes of Lady Macbeth. And, above all, the colour is the colour of blood. It cannot be an accident that the image of blood is forced upon us continually, not merely by the events themselves, but by full descriptions, and even by reiteration of the word in unlikely parts of the dialogue. The Witches, after their first wild appearance, have hardly quitted the stage when there staggers on to it a 'bloody man' gashed with wounds. His tale is of a hero whose 'brandished steel smoked with bloody execution,' 'carved out a passage' to his enemy, and 'unseamed him from the nave to the chaps.' And then he tells of a second battle so bloody that the combatants seemed as if they 'meant to bathe in reeking wounds.' What metaphors? What a dreadful image is that with which Lady Macbeth greets us almost as she enters, when she prays the spirits of cruelty so 'to thicken her blood that pity cannot flow along her veins.' What pictures are those of the murderer appearing at the door of the banquet room with Banquo's 'blood upon his face'; of Banquo himself 'with twenty trenched gashes on his head,' or 'blood-bolter'd' and smiling in derision at his murderer; of Macbeth, gazing at his hand, and watching it dye the whole green ocean red; of Lady Macbeth, gazing at her's and stretching it away from her face to escape the smell of blood that 'all the perfumes of Arabia will not subdue.' The most horrible lines in the whole tragedy are those of the shuddering cry. 'Yet who would have thought the old man to have so much blood in him?' And it is not only at such moments that these images occur. Even in the quiet conversation of Malcolm and Macduff, Macbeth is imagined as holding a bloody sceptre, and Scotland as a country bleeding and receiving every day a new gash added to her wounds. It is as if the poet saw the whole story through an ensanguined mist and as if it stained the very blackness of the night. When Macbeth, before Banquo's murder, invokes night to scarf up the tender eyes of pitiful day, and so tear in

pieces the great bond that keeps him pale, even the invisible hand that is to tear the bond is imagined as covered with blood."

(3) **6. What elements, besides blood and darkness, contribuce to the atmosphere of *Macbeth* ?**

Ans. Bradley says, "The vividness, magnitude, and violence of the imagery in some of the passages are characteristics of *Macbeth* almost throughout ; and their influence contributes to form its atmosphere. Images like those of the babe torn smiling from the breast and dashed to death ; of pouring the sweet milk of concord into hell ; of the earth shaking in fever ; of the frame of things disjointed ; of sorrows striking heaven on the face, so that it resounds and yells out like syllables of dolour ; of the mind lying in restless ecstasy of a rack; of the mind full of scorpions ; of the tale told by an idiot ; full of sound and fury ; all keep the imagination moving on a 'wild and violent sea,' while it is scarcely for a moment permitted to dwell on thoughts of peace and beauty. In its language, as in its action, the drama is full of tumult and storm. Whenever the Witches are present we see and hear a thunderstorm ; when they are absent we hear of ship-wrecking storms and direful thunders; of tempests that blow down trees and churches, castles, palaces and pyramids ; of the frightful hurricanes of the night when Duncan was murdered ; of the blast on which pity rides like a new-born babe or on which heaven's cherubim are horsed. There is thus something magnificently appropriate in the cry 'Blow, wind,' some wrack with which Macbeth turning from the side of the moving wood of Birnam, burst from his castle. He was borne to his throne on a whirlwind, and the fate he goes to meet comes on the wings of a storm."

Q. 7. What devices have been adopted by Shakespeare to give dreadful touches to the atmosphere of *Macbeth* ?

Ans. Bradley says that all the agencies of darkness, delights and colours that illuminate it, the storm that rushes

through it, and violent and gigantic images conspire with the appearances of the Witches and Ghosts awaken horror, and in some degree also a suspernatural dread. And to this effect other influences contribute. The pictures called out by the mere words of the Witches stir the same feelings, those for example, of the spellbound sailor driven tempest-tost for nine times nine weary weeks, and never visited by sleep night or day ; of the drop of poisonous foam that forms on the moon and falling to earth is collected for pernicious ends ; of the sweltering venom of the toad, the finger of the babe killed at its birth by its own mother, the tricklings from the murderers' gibbet. In Nature again something is felt to be at work, sympathetic with human guilt and supernatural malice. She labours with portents.

> Lamentings heard in the air, strange scream of death,
> And prophesying with accents terrible,

burst from her. The owl clamours all through the night ; Duncan's horses devour each other in frenzy ; the dawn comes, but no light with it. Common sights and sounds, the crying of crickets, the croak of the raven, the light thickening after sunset, the home-coming of the rooks, are all ominous. Then, as if to deepen these impressions, Shakespeare has concentrated attention on the obscurer regions of man's being, on phenomena which make it seem that he is in the power of secret forces lurking below, and independent of his consciousness and will : such as the relapse of Macbeth from conversation into a reverie, during which he gazes fascinated at the image of murder drawing closer and closer, the writing on his face of strange things he never meant to show; the pressure of imgination heightening into illusion, like the vision of a dagger in the air, at first bright, then suddenly splashed with blood, of the sound of a voice that cried 'Sleep no more' and would not be silenced. To these are added other, and constant, illusions to sleep ; man's strange half-conscious life; to the misery of its withholding; to the terrible dreams of remorse; to the cursed thoughts from which Banquo is free by day, but which tempt him in his sleep : and again to abnormal disturbances of sleep; in the two men, of whom one during the

murder of Duncan laughed in his sleep, and the other raised to re-enact in somnambulism those scenes the memory of which is pushing her on to madness or suicide. All this has one effect, to excite supernatural alarm and even more, a dread of the presence of evil not only in its recognised seat but all through and around our mysterious nature. Perhaps there is no other. work equal to *Macbeth* in the production of this effect.

Q. 8. What literary device is used by Shakespeare in building up the atmosphere of *Macbeth*?

Ans. Professor Bradley maintains that the sense of dread in *Macbeth* is enhanced by the use of a literary expedient. The Professor points out, "Not even in *Richard III*, which in this, as in other respects, has resemblances, refer to irony in the ordinary sense; to speeches, for example, where the speaker is intentionally ironical, like that of *Lennox in III, vi.* I refer to irony on the part of the author himself, to ironical juxtapositions of persons and events, and especially to the 'Sophoclean irony' by which a speaker is made to use words bearing to the audience, in addition to his own meaning, a further and ominous sense, hidden from himself and usually from the other persons on the stage. The very first words uttered by Macbeth,

So foul and fair a day I have not seen

are an example to which attention has often been drawn; for they startle the reader by recalling the words of the Witches in the first scene.

Fair is foul, and foul is fair.

When Macbeth, emerging from his murderous reverie, turns to the nobles saying, 'Let us toward the King,' his words are innocent but to the reader have a double meaning. Duncan's comment on the treachery of Cawdor.

There's no art
To find the mind's construction in the face :
He was a gentleman on whom I built
An absolute trust,

is interrupted by the entrance of the traitor Macbeth, who is greeted with effusive gratitude and a like 'absolute trust.' I have already referred to the ironical effect of the beautiful lines in which Duncan and Banquo describe the castle they are about to enter. To the reader Lady Macbeth's light words,

> A little water clears us of this deed :
> How easy is it then,

summon up the picture of the sleep-walking scene. The idea of the Porter's speech, in which he imagines himself the keeper of hell-gate, shows the same irony. So does the contrast between the obvious and the hidden meanings of the apparitons of the armed head, the bloody child, and the child with the tree in his hand. It would be easy to add further examples. Perhaps the most striking is the answer which Banquo, as he rides away, never to return alive, gives to Macbeth's reminder, 'Fail not our feast.' 'My lord, I will not,' he replies, and he keeps his promise. It cannot be by accident that Shakespeare so frequently in this play uses a device which contributes to excite the vague fear of hidden forces operating on minds unconscious of their influence.''

Q. 9. "If the inward connection is once realised," says Bradley, "we need not fear, and indeed shall scarcely be able to exaggerate the effect of the Witch-scenes in heightening and deepening the sense of fear, horror and mystery which pervades the atmosphere of tragedy." How does Bradley prove this contention ?

Ans. Professor Bradley describes the supernatural as a ''potent agency'' influencing the atmosphere from the very outset. ''It would be almost an inpertinence to attempt to describe anew the influence of the Witch-scenes on the imagination of the reader, says the Professor. He proceeds to say, ''Nor do I believe that among different readers this influence differs except in degree. But when critics began to analyse the imaginative effect, and still more when, going behind it, they try to determine the truth which lay for Shakespeare or lies for us in these creations, they too often

offer us results which, either through perversion or through inadequacy, fail to correspond with that effect. This happens in opposite ways. On the one hand the Witches, whose contribution to the 'atmosphere' of *Macbeth* can hardly be exaggerated, are credited with too great an influence upon the action ; sometimes they are described as goddesses, or even as fates, whom Macbeth is powerless to resist. And this is perversion. On the other hand, we are told that, great as is their influence on the action, it is so because they are merely symbolic representations of the unconscious or half-conscious guilt in Macbeth himself. And this is inadequate. The few remarks I have to make may take the form of a criticism on these views.

(1) As to the former, Shakespeare took, as material for his purposes, the idea about witchcreft that he found existing in people around him and in books life Reginald Scot's *Discovery* (1584). And he used these ideas without changing their substance at all. He selected and improved, avoiding the merely ridiculous dismissing (unlike Middleton) the sexually loathsome or stimulating, rehandling and heightening whatever could touch the imagination with fear, horror, and mysterious attraction. The witches that is, to say, are not goddesses, or fates, or, in any way whatever, supernatural beings. They are old women, poor and ragged, skinny and hideous, full of vulgar spite, occupied in killing their neighbours, swine or revenging themselves on sailors' wives who have refused them chestnuts. If Banquo considers their beards a proof that they are not women, that only shows his ignorance : Sir Hugh Evans would have known better. There is not a syllable in *Macbeth* to imply that they are anything but women. But, again, in accordance with the popular ideas, they are received from evil spirits certain supernatural powers. They can 'raise haile, tempests, and hurtfull weather ; as lightening, thunder, etc.' They can passe from place to place in the aire invisible.' They can 'keepe devils and spirits in the likenesse of todes and cats,' Paddock or Gry-milkin. They can 'transferre corne in the blade from one place to another.' They can manifest unto others things hidden and lost, and foreshew things to come, and see them as though they were present. The reader will

apply these phrases and sentences at once to passages in *Macbeth.* They are all taken from Scot's first chapter, where he is retailing the current superstitions of his time ; and, in regard to the witches, Shakespeare mentions scarcely anything, if anything that was not to be found, of course, in a more prosaic shape, either in Scot or in some other easily accessible authority. He read, to be sure, in Holinshed, his main source for the story of Macbeth, that according to the common opinion, the 'women' who met Macbeth 'were eyther the weir l sisters, that is (as ye would say) ye Goddesses of destinee, or els some Nimphes or Feiries. But what does that matter ? What he read in his authority was absolutely nothing to his audience, and remains nothing to us, unless he **used** what he read. And he did not use this idea. He used nothing but the phrase 'weird sisters,' which certainly no more suggested to a London audience the Parcae of one mythology or the Norns of another that it does to-day. His Witches owe all their power to the spirits ; they are **instruments** of darkness ; the spirits are their masters. Even if the passage where Hecate appears are Shakespeare's, that will not help the Witches ; for they are subject to Hecate, who is herself a goddess or superior devil, not a fate.

Next, while the influence of the witches' prophecies on Macbeth is very great, it is quite clearly shown to be an influence and nothing more. There is no sign whatever in the play that Shakespeare meant the actions of Macbeth to be forced on him by an external power, whether that of the witches or of their 'masters,' or of Hecate. It is needless therefore to insist that such a conception would be in contradiction with his whole tragic practice. The prophecies of the Witches are presented simply as dangerous circumstances with which Macbeth has to deal : they are dramatically on the same level as the story of the Ghost in **Hamlet** or the falsehoods told by Iago to Othello. Macbeth is, in the ordinary sense, perfectly free in regard to them : and if we speak of degrees of freedom, he is even more free than Hamlet, who was crippled by melancholy when the Ghost appeared upon him. That the influence of the first prophecies upon him came as much from himself as from them, is made abundantly clear by the obviously intentional contrast

between him and Banquo. Banquo, ambitious but perfectly honest, is scarcely even startled by them, and he remains throughout the scene indifferent to them. But when Macbeth heard them he was not an innocent man. Precisely how far his mind was guilty may be a question; but no innocent man would have started, as he did, with a start of **fear** at the mere prophecy of a crown, or have conceived thereupon **immediately** the thought of murder. Whether this thought was not new to him, or he had cherished at least some vaguer dishonourable dream, the instantaneous recurrence of which, at the moment of his hearing the prophecy, revealed to him an inward and terrifying guilt. In either case not only was he free to accept or resist the temptation, but the temptation was already within him. We are admitting too much, therfore, when we compare him with Othello, for Othello's mind was perfectly free from suspicion when his temptation came to him. And we are admitting, again, too much when we use the word 'temptation' in reference to the first prophecies of the witches. Speaking strictly, we must affirm that he was tempted only by himself. He speaks indeed of their 'supernatural soliciting'; but in fact they did not solicit. They merely announced events: they hailed him as Thane of Glamis, Thane of Cawdor, and King hereafter. No connection of these announcements with any action of his was even hinted by them. For all that appears, the natural death of an old man might have fulfilled the prophecy any day. In any case, the idea of fulfilling it by murder was entirely his own.

When Macbeth sees the Witches again, after the murders of Duncan and Banquo, we observe, however, a striking change. They no longer need to go and meet him; he seeks them out. He has committed himself to his course of evil. Now accordingly they do 'solicit.' They prophesy, but they also give advice. They bid him be bloody, bold, and secure. We have no hope that he will reject their advice; but so far are they from having, even now, any power to compel him to accept it, that they make careful preparations to deceive him into doing so. And, almost as though to intimate how entirely the responsibility for his deeds still lies with Macbeth, Shakespeare makes his first act

after this interview one for which his tempters gave him not a hint—the slaughter of Macduff's wife and children.

To all this we must add that Macbeth himself nowhere betrays a suspicion that his action is, or has been, thrust on him by and external power. He curses the witches for deceiving him, but he never attempts to shift to them the burden of his guilt. Neither has Shakespeare placed in the mouth of any other character in this play such fatalistic expressions as may be found in *King Lear* and occasionally elsewhere. He appears actually to have taken pains to make the natural psychological genesis of Macbeth's crimes perfectly clear, and it was a most unfortunate notion of Schlegel's that the witches were required because natural agencies would have seemed too weak to drive such a man as Macbeth to his first murder.

'Still,' it may be said, 'the witches did foreknow Macbeth's future ; and that is fixed ; and how can a man be responsible when his future is fixed ?' With this question, as a speculative one, we have no concern here ; but, in so far as it relates to the play, I answer, first, that not one of the things foreknown is an action. This is just as true of the later prophesies as of the first. That Macbeth will be harmed by none of women born, and will never be vanquished till Birnam Wood shall come against him, involves (so far as we are informed) no action of his. It may be doubted, indeed, whether Shakespeare would have introduced prophecies of Macbeth's deeds. Even if it had been convenient to do so he would probably have felt that to do so would interfere with the interest of the inward struggle and suffering. And, in the second place, *Macbeth* was not written for students of metaphysics or theology, but for people at large ; and, whoever it may be, with prophecies of actions, prophecies of mere events do not suggest to people at large any sort of difficulty about responsibility. Many people, perhaps most, habitually think of their 'future' as something fixed, and of themselves as 'free.' The Witches now-a-days take a room in Bond Street and charge a guinea ; and when the victim erters they hail him the possesser of £1000 a year, or prophesy to him of

journeys, wives, and children. But though he is struck dumb by their prescience, it does not even cross his mind that he is going to lose his glorious 'freedom'—not though journeys and marriages imply much more agency on his part than anything foretold to Macbeth. This whole difficulty is undramatic; and I may add that Shakespeare nowhere shows, like Chaucer, any interest in speculative problems concerning foreknowledge, predestination and freedom.

(2) We may deal more briefly with the opposite interpretation. According to it the witches and their prophecies are to be taken merely as symbolical representations of thoughts and desires which have slumbered in Macbeth's breast and now rise into consciousness and confront him. With this idea, which springs from the wish to get rid of a mere external supernaturalism, and to find a psychological and spiritual meaning in that which the groundlings probably received as hard facts, one may feel sympathy. But it is evident that it is rather a 'philosophy' of the witches than an immediate dramatic apprehension of them; and even so it will be found both incomplete and, in other respects, inadequate.

It is incomplete because it cannot possibly be applied to all the facts. Let us grant that it will apply to the most important prophecy, that of the crown; and that the later warning which Macbeth receives, to beware of Macduff, also answers to something in his own breast and 'harps his fear aright.' But there we have to stop. Macbeth had evidently no suspicion of that treachery in Cawdor through which he himself became Thane; and who will suggest that he had any idea, however subconscious, about Birnam Wood or the man not born of woman? It may be held—and rightly, I think—that the prophecies which answer to nothing inward, the prophecies which are merely supernatural, produce, now at any rate, much less imaginative effect than the others,—even that they are in *Macbeth* an element which was of an age and not for all time; but still they are there, and they are essential to the plot. And as the theory under consideration will not apply to them at all, it is not likely that it gives an adequate account even of those prophecies to which it can in some measure be applied.

It is inadequate here chiefly because it is much too narrow. The witches and their prophecies, if they are to be rationalised or taken symbolically, must represent not only the evil slumbering in the hero's soul, but all those obscurer influencee of the evil around him in the world which aid his own ambition and the incitements of his wife. Such influence, even if we put aside all belief in evil 'spirits,' are as certain, momentous, and terrifying facts as the presence of inchoate evil in the soul itself ; and if we exclude all reference to these facts from our idea of the witches, it will be greatly impoverished and will certainly fail to correspond with the imaginative effect. The union of the outward and inward here may be compared with something of the same kind in Greek poetry. In the first book of the *Iliad* we are told that when Agamemnon threatened to take Briseis from Achilles, 'grief came upon Peleus' son, and his heart within his shaggy breast was divided in counsel, whether to draw his keen blade from his thigh and set the company aside and so slay Atreides, or to assuage his anger and curb his soul. While yet he doubted thereof in heart and soul, and was drawing his great sword from his sheath, Athene came to him from heaven, sent forth of the white-armed goddess Hera, whose heart loved both alike and had care for them. She stood behind Peleus' son and caught him by his golden hair, to him only visible, and of the rest no man beheld her.' And at her bidding he mastered his wrath, 'and stayed his heavy hand on the silver hilt, and thrust the great sword back into the sheathe, and was not disobedient to the saying of Athene.' The succour of the goddess here only strengthens an inward movement in the mind of Achilles, but we should lose something besides a poetic effect if for that reason we struck her out of the account. We should lose the idea that the inward powers of the soul answer in their essence to vaster powers without, which support them and assure the effect of their exertion. So it is in *Macbeth*. The words of the witches are fatal to the hero only because there is in him something which leaps into light at the sound of them, but they are at the same time the witness of forces which never cease to work in the world around him, entangle him inextricably in the web of Fate. If the inward connection is once

realised (and Shakespeare had left us no excuse for missing it) we need not fear, and indeed shall scarcely be able to exaggerate the effect of the witch-scenes in heightening and deepening the sense of fear, horror, and mystery which pervades the atmosphere of the tragedy.

The Ghost of Banquo

Prof. Bradley declares : "I do not think the suggestions that the Ghost on its first appearance is Banquo's, and on its second Duncan's, or vice versa, are worth discussion. But the question whether Shakespeare meant the Ghost to be real or a mere hallucination, has some interest and I have not seen it fully examined.

The following reasons may be given for the hallucination view :

(1) We remember that Macbeth has already seen one hallucination, that of the dagger ; and if we failed to remember it Lady Macbeth would remind us of it here :

> This is the very painting of young fear ;
> This is the air-drawn dagger which, you said,
> Led you to Duncan.

(2) The Ghost seems to be created by Macbeth's imagination : for his words,

> now they rise again
> With twenty mortal murders on their crowns

describe it, and they echo what the murderer has said to him a little before,

> Safe in a ditch he bides
> With twenty trenched gashes on his head.

(3) It vanishes the second time on his making a violent effort and asserting its unreality :

> Hence, horrible shadow !
> Unreal mockery, hence !

This is not quite the first time, but then too its disappearance follows on his defying it :

> Why what care I ? If you canst nod, speak too.

So, apparently, the dagger vanishes when he exclaims, 'There's no such thing !'

(4) At the end of the scene Macbeth himself seems to regard it as an illusion :

> My strange and self-abuse
> Is the initiate fear that wants hard use.

(5) It does not speak, like the Ghost in Hamlet, even on its last appearance, and like the Ghost in Julius Caesar.

(6) It is visible only to Macbeth.

I should attach no weight to (6) taken alone. Of (3) it may be remarked that Brutus himself seems to attribute the vanishing of Caesar's Ghost to his taking courage : 'Now I have taken heart thou vanishest.' Yet he certainly holds it to be real. It may also be remembered on (5) that Caesar's Ghost says nothing that Brutus's own forebodings might not have conjured up. And further it may be asked why, if the Ghost of Banquo was meant for an illusion, it was represented on the stage, as the stage directions and Forman's account shows it to have been.

On the whole, and with some doubt, I think that Shakespeare (1) meant the judicious to take the Ghost for an hallucination, but (2) knew that the bulk of the audience would take it for a reality. And I am more sure of (2) than of (1),"

Does Lady Macbeth Really Faint ?

Prof. Bradley declares : "In the scene of confusion where the murder of Ducan is discovered, Macbeth and Lennox return from the royal chamber, Lennox describes the grooms who, as it seemed, had done the deed :

> Their hands and faces were all badged with blood ;

So were their daggers, which unwiped we found
Upon their pillows :
They stared, and were distracted ; no man's life
Was to be trusted with them.

Macb. O, yet I do repent me of my fury
That I did kill them.

Macd. Wherefore did you so ?

Macb. Who can be wise, amazed, temperate and furious,
Loyal and neutral, in a moment ? No man :
The expedition of my violent love
Outran the pauser, reason. Here lay Duncan,
His silver skin laced with his golden blood ;
And his gash'd stabs looked like a breach in nature
For ruin's wasteful entrance ; there, the murderers,
Steep'd in the colours of their trade, their daggers
Unmannerly breech'd with gore : who could refrain,
That had a heart to love, and in that heart
Courage to make's love known ?

At this point Lady Macbeth exclaims, 'Help me hence, ho !' Her husband takes no notice, but Macduff calls out 'Look to the lady.' This, after a few words 'aside' between Malcolm and Donalban, is repeated by Banquo, and, very shortly after, all except Duncan's sons exeunt. (The stage-direction 'Lady Macbeth is carried out,' after Banquo's exclamation 'Look to the lady,' is not in the Ff and was introduced by Rowe. If Ff are right, she can hardly have fainted away. But the point has no importance here.)

Does Lady Macbeth really turn faint, or does she pretend? The latter seems to have been the general view, and Whatley pointed out that Macbeth's indifference betrays his consciousness that the faint was not real. But to this it may be answered that, if he believed it to be real, he would equally show indifference, in order to display his horror at the murder. And Miss Helen Faucit and others have held that there was no pretence.

In favour of the pretence it may be said (1) that Lady Macbeth, who herself took back the daggers, saw the old King in his blood, and smeared the grooms, was not the woman to faint at the mere description; (2) that she saw her husband over-acting his part, and saw the faces of the lords, and wished to end the scene,—which she succeeded in doing.

But to the last argument it may be replied that she would not willingly have run the risk of leaving her husband to act his part alone. And for other reasons we believe that she is meant really to faint. She was no Goneril. She knew that she could not kill the King herself; and she never expected to have to carry back the daggers, see the bloody corpse, and smear the faces and hands of the grooms. But Macbeth's agony greatly alarmed her, and she was driven to the scene of horror to complete his task; and what an impression it made on her we know from that sentence uttered in her sleep, 'Yet who would have thought the old man to have had so much blood in him?' She had now, further, gone through the ordeal of the discovery. Is it not quite natural that the reaction should come, and that it should come just when Macbeth's description recalls the scene which had cost her the greatest effort. Is it not likely, besides, that the expression on the faces of the lords would force her to realise, what before the murder she had refused to consider, the horror and the suspicion it must excite? It is noticeable, also, that she is far from carrying out her intention of bearing a part in making their 'grief and calmour roar upon his death.' She has left it all to her husband, and, after uttering but two sentences, the second of which is answered very curtly by Banquo, for some time

(an interval of 33 lines) she has said nothing. I believe Shakespeare means this interval to be occupied in desperate efforts on her part to prevent herself from giving way, as she sees for the first time something of the truth to which she was formerly so blind, and which will destroy her in the end.

It should be observed that at the close of the banquet scene, where she has gone through much less, she is evidently exhausted.

Shakespeare, of course, knew whether he meant the faint to be real ; but I am not aware if an actor of the part could show the audience whether it was real or pretended. If he could, he would doubtless receive instructions from the author.

Q. 10. What is the dramatic significance of the second Scene of the first Act ?

Ans. According to Chambers, Shakespeare puts us in possession of the situation between Macbeth and Duncan by giving a review of the developments at the battlefield in which Macbeth's bravery and the treachery of the Thane of Cawdor has been discussed. In the first scene we have only heard of this brave general, Macbeth, and in the present scene his character has been presented to us through others on a magnified scale. The Sergeant and Ross paint a heroic portrait of the hero of the play. For his extraordinary valour and courage he receives tributes of admiration from the King. We come to know that Macbeth possesses two great qualities—(1) boldness and (2) resourcefulness—along with other fine aspects. It is due to his heroism that he has been described as "Bellona's bridegroom" and "Valour's minion." We now feel deep curiosity and eagerness in our heart to meet the man and to see with our own eyes the hero in all his splendour.

Q. 11. The device of a verbal report by the bleeding Captain is absurd and ridiculous from the dramatic point of view. Discuss.

Ans. Critics have raised many objections to this scene from various points of view. One of such attacks is the above. It has been made by **Cunningham.** He cannot understand what dramatic necessity could be there for the verbal report by the bleeding sergeant. In his opinion, it is absurd and ridiculous. The attack of this critic may be repelled on the ground that here Shakespeare has followed the classical tradition imported into England during the Renaissance. The conventions of Senecan Dramas were, so to speak, naturalised in England and as Shakespeare has received influence of **Seneca**, he has raised up the structure of this scene on the same tradition. We come across this device in Senecan drama to present the full-fledged portrait of a battle. The description of such battles are put in the mouth of messengers. The force of language gives a living touch to the description and we may easily imagine the various activities in the battlefield. Shakespeare has brought forward the bleeding sergeant so that our mind's eye may graphically picture to us the bloody scene of war. The report presented by the sergeant is in no way irrelevant and absurd. It exposes before us the glorious character of Macbeth. As we know, a hero must shine in his glory in order to desirably arose our pity and sympathy by his tragic ruin. No doubt critics like Professor **Quiller-Couch** have tried to argue that Macbeth possesses the qualities of a villain more than of a hero and that it is a matter of surprise how Shakespeare has set up a villain to play the role of a hero in a grave tragedy like Macbeth. Now if even this glamour had not been thrown upon the character of Macbeth, there would have been no ground of a defence against such attacks. The device adopted by Shakespeare in this scene is dramatically justifiable on more grounds than one, and we may dismiss every objection raised in this respect.

Q. 12. How far is Shakespeare indebted to Holinshed in respect of various principal characters in ***Macbeth*** **?**

Ans. Shakespeare's debt to **Holinshed** on the side of incident has been stressed enough [see Introduction]; on the side of character it has still to be appreciated to the full.

Bradley observes that, Apart from the incorporation of such elements from other parts of the Scottish Chronicle, Shakespeare made free as usual with Holinshed's account of Macbeth's reign. First, he compressed its seventeen years into about ten weeks; much as he had done with the reign of Henry IV and for much the same motives of dramatic art. In retailing, for example, the valiant deeds of Macbeth before the meeting with the Witches, he fused into one three separate campaigns referred to by Holinshed: (*i*) the revolt and defeat of Macdonwald in *Lochaber* (*ii*) the invasion of Fife by Sueno, King of Norway; (*iii*) the second invasion of Fife by King Canute, in revenge for his brother's defeat; though it remains doubtful how much of this condensation belongs to his original draft and how much to the later processes of compression or abridgement, He transmuted, again, references to Duncan's 'feeble and slothful administration' and to his 'too much of clemencie' into a winning and gracious benevolence, which seems to overflow with generous impulses while I suspect that the second phrase came to be associated in his mind with Macbeth himself. On the other hand, he suppressed every hint of a Macbeth who 'set his whole intention to maintayne justice,' 'to punish all enormities and abuses,' and to furnish the realm with 'commendable laws,' traces of the vigorous and firm ruler which had survived the tides of denigration above described, while he was careful to exclude also suggestions, likewise still discernible in Holinshed, that Macbeth possessed some claim to the throne. Shakespeare's Macbeth is a mere usurper and 'untitled tyrant' who after the murder of Duncan respects neither justice nor mercy. Here again there are good dramatic reasons for the change; but there are other reasons too. The process of defamation begun in the thirteenth century culminates in this play by a 'servant' of King James and a writer for the King's company of players. That the same writer also succeeds in endowing the 'tyrant bloody-sceptred' with enough nobility and 'human kindness' to claim our pity, is simply to say that he was Shakespeare.

But it was in the representation of the character of Banquo that he departs most strikingly from his source. And here also the desire to please his royal master and the

demands of his art seems inextricably blended. Oddly enough Boece makes Banquo an accomplice in the murder of Duncan. 'At length,' writes Holinshed of Macbeth, expanding Boece a little, 'communicating his purposed intent with his trustie friends, amongts whom Banquo was the chiefest, upon confidence of their promised aid, he slew the king at Everness.' Traces in the complicity remained in the veiled approaches which Shakespeare's Macbeth appears to make towards Banquo at *1. 3. 153—55* and *2. 1. 20—29*, while on the second occasion Banquo is thought by many, in my view mistakenly, to be aware that treachery is afoot. But Shakespeare could have exhibited the ancestor of King James before his very eyes as a murderer's confederate. On the contrary, he makes him the soul of honour and loyalty, and entirely unsuspicious of Macbeth's intentions beforehand, while to him is given the lofty protestation afterwards :

> In the great hand of God I stand, and thence
> Against the undivulged pretence I fight
> Of treasonous malice.

Yet these brave words are followed by no action. And **Bradley** deduces from this and from his speech at *3. 1. 1—10* that, though no accomplice, Banquo becomes an accessory after the act. Commenting upon the speech, he writes— "When next we see him, on the last day of his life, we find that he has yielded to evil. The Witches and his own ambition have conquered him. He alone of the lords knew of the prophecies, but he has said nothing of them. He has acquiesced in Macbeth's accession and in the official theory that Duncan's sons had suborned the chamberlain to murder him.

The passage shows **Bradley** at his weakest, treating Shakespeare as if he were a historian, answering questions that should not be asked of Elizabethan drama, and drawing deductions which assuredly the dramatist never in the least intended. For King James's ancestor could no more be a cowardly time-server than he could be privy to the assassination of his liege lord. And as if to prevent anyone

supposing it for a moment, Shakespeare makes Macbeth pay a special tribute to 'his royalty of nature,' 'dauntless temper of his mind,' and 'a wisdom that doth guide his valour.' **Bradley** quotes this to illustrate Macbeth's fear that Banquo is plotting against him, but fails to observe that it reflects upon the character of Banquo himself. Yet why is it that despite Macbeth's fear, Banquo never gives a hint of meditating any action, violent or otherwise? And invitation to supper couched in respectful, almost obsequious, terms, although uttered immediately after his soliloquy referring to Macbeth's guilt? It is not at least true to say, in the words of **Sir Herbert Grierson,** who does not subscribe to *Bradley's* explanation, that 'Banquo's position at Macbeth's court is a very ambiguous one.' Some ambiguity there certainly is; and I think it may be accounted for, like other ambiguities in the text, by assuming that Banquo was given scope to make his position clear in the full-length play, either by soliloquy or in conversation with other thanes. Yet, even as the text stands, King James we may be sure, perceived nothing but what was plain and right and proper; for his ancestor would simply follow the precepts of his most distinguished successors. Usurper, tyrant, murderer as he was, Macbeth has been crowned at school: and according to Jame's ideas of kingship, as expounded in his Trew of Free Monarchies, once a king has been anointed, be he 'an idolatrous persecutor' like Nebuchadnezzar or 'a bloody tyrant' and 'monster to the world' like Nero, his subjects' duty as laid down in Holy Writ, his perfect obedience and even prayers for his prosperity. But the 'rise of kings' was hereditary as well as divine. There was one person, therefore, who might raise the standard against the usurper, and in whose cause Macbeth's subjects might take up arms against him, *viz.*, the lineal heir of Duncan, Malcolm Prince of Cumberland. Macduff knows this and acts upon it; and it may well be that Banquo, with 'wisdom that doth guide his valour' was made privy to his purposes in the unrevised play, certainly, the plot was gain from a scene between the two immediately after 2. 3. in the existing text. Until Malcolm appears on Scottish soil, however, Banquo must

behave to the reigning monarch like a loyal and respectful subject as we find him doing.

It has long been supposed that Lady Macbeth is almost wholly a child of Shakespeare's invention ; supposition which rests on the assumption that Holinshed was Shakespeare's only historical source. Holinshed tells that Macbeth had a wife, 'veri ambitious; burning a unquenchable desire to beare the name of a queene' who 'lay sore upon him to attempt the thing,' and that Donwald also had a wife who 'counselled him (site the King often times used to lodge in his house without any garde about him other than the garyson of the castell which was wholly at his commandment) to make him away and shewed him the meanes whreby he might soonest accomplish it' ; which he did, 'though he abhorred the act greatlie in heart.' And that is all. Shakespeare, however, as **Mrs. Stopes** pointed out in 1916, though no one appears to notice it, was probably acquainted with another source of Scottish history, since several of his points seem to have been taken from it, points mostly connected with Lady Macbeth. This source was a manuscript of **William Stewart's** Buik of the *Croniclis of Scotland*, a metrical and expanded translation of Boece, said to have been made for King James V at the command of Queen Margret, widow of James IV; and finished in 1535; though not printed until 1858. Stewart, who often gives us the actual words of his characters, relates that Macbeth's wife rated him and called him a coward.

The nature of the three Weird Sisters has been much discussed by critics : yet it seems to have occurred to none of them that it was in all probability much discussed also by Shakespeare's public. The operation of spirits and devils was a favourite subject of speculation not only among experts on demonology like King James, but with all students of 'philosophy', which we should now call science. And readers, busy with Scottish history at the beginning of James's reign in order to become *all courant* with the new dynasty, could not possibly remain ignorant of the story, as told by Holinshed, of Banquo being promised that the House of Stewart should occupy the throne, and of the

Norn-like 'goddesses of destiny' who as 'women in strange and wild apparell, resembling creatures of an elder world' uttered the great prophecy in question. So familiar was it indeed that students of St. John's College dressed as 'tres' quasi Sibyllae' had met James on his visit to Oxford in 1605 and recited Latin verses to him, while, when the astrologer **Simon Forman** made notes of a performance of *Macbeth* seen at the Globe in 1611, his impressions were clearly influenced by memories of Holinshed's accounts. Yet as such readers listened to the opening scenes of Shakespeare's play, they may well have asked themselves whether the august and auspicious figures which Holinshed describes and which appear as great ladies in his illustrations could possibly be the same as the foul hags rising from hell to claps of thunder, grinning and capering in obscene dances, gloating over parts of dismembered bodies, whom Shakespeare presents, 'Weird Sisters' though he might call them. On the other hand, he seems careful never to call them witches; and though they behave as much at the beginning of 1 and 4. 1 they have, as all critics have noted, something at once sublime and abysmally evil about them which marks them sharply off from the ordinary mortal witches such as his England and specially his Scottish king were thoroughly acquainted with. We can ourselves realise this distinction by comparing them with the witches in contemporary drama: with the merely nauseous hags of **Johnson's** *Masque of Queens*, for example with the pitiful old village crone in *The Witch of Edmonton*, with the well-to-do wife and mother who practises witchcraft in **Heywood's** *Lancashire Witches*, or with the meretricious sylphs whose trivial amours bore us in **Middleton's** *Witch*. Too witch-like to be Norns, too Norn-like to be witches, what then are they? The answer is that, borrowing from both conceptions, Shakespeare made something new of his own as truly his own, **Coleridge** observes, 'as his Ariel and Caliban'. They had to be sufficiently like witches at first view for his audience to accept them as creatures within their ken: they had to seem increasingly mysterious and forbidding on further acquaintance to be recognised as creatures more terrible than witches. The Weird Sisters in *Macbeth* are the incarnation of evil in the universe, all

the more effective dramatically that their nature is never defined. 'They are,' writes Lamb, 'foul anomalies of whom we know not whence they are sprung, nor whether they have beginning or ending. As they are without human passions, so they seem to be without human relations. They come with thunder and lightning, and vanish to airy music. This is all we know of them.' And that we can fancy Shakespeare echoing, is all ye need to know. But one thing can be said of them : though ' Paracae' is the word in Boece which **Bellendon** translates 'weird sister', they are not Fates or anything corresponding with that conception in Shakespeare ; for ' Macbeth exercises complete freedom of will from first to last. They set the play moving because they bring with them 'the filthy air, of ineffable evil which is its atmosphere, but they are no more the agents of what follows than 'the internal serpent, is the authour 'of all our woe, in **Milton's** epic. Just as *The Book of Job* **Goethe's** *Faust* begin in Heaven, so by introducing the Weird Sisters into his introductory scenes Shakespeare begins *Macbeth* where Milton begin's *Paradise Lost* in Hell. For the theme of both is Temptation and Fall, the assault by Hell upon two great human souls."

Q. 13. The third scene of the first Act serves to bring out the contrasted traits in the characters of Macbeth and Banquo. Discuss.

Ans. The meeting of the two generals Macbeth and Banquo with the witches in the desert is of great significance. The manner in which each of these generals receives the prophecies of the witches, brings out to the surface the contrasted traits of their characters. The influence of the supernatural prediction is not the same on them. Banquo's final impression is beautifully revealed by Shakespeare in the lines in which he describes them as mere transitory bubbles of the earth. To Macbeth the witches are not so fantastic and meaningless. They are on the other hand realities whose presence is always welcome. While passing through a heath, the two generals are confronted by the strange appearance of the three witches in dark and gloomy weather, they are simply amazed. The witches

address Macbeth and hail him as Thane of Glamis and Thane of Cawdor. The third witch predicts that he would be the future king of Scotland. These bright promises of future glory stirred up high ambition in Macbeth. He started and fell into reverie. The high aspiration lying in his heart dormant uptil now woke up. The influence of prophecies on Macbeth is so obvious that even his colleague, Banquo, is astonished. His altered attitude does not escape his friend's eye. He asks him the reason of his being so effected by the empty words and suspicious promises.

Banquo himself wants to know something about his future. Turning to the weird sisters, he addresses them sceptically as creatures of a disturbed fancy and expresses his wish that they should read his future if they had power to do so. The witches hold out a promise for his children. His descendants will reign as kings. Macbeth wants to know the source of the mysterious intelligence of the witches. He is disappointed because the witches suddenly melt themselves in the thin air, leaving Macbeth revolving in his thoughts. Banquo is free from the frailties of Macbeth's character. He is innocent. Guilty and ambitious hopes crowd Macbeth's heart. The witches lead his evil mind from evil to evil. They tempt him because the ground is soft for that. This was briefly the effect of the prophecies of the witches on the characters of the two generals. [More matter on the various traits of the characters of Macbeth and Banquo may be quoted here from sketches.]

Q. 14. How does the "supernatural" influence that assails Macbeth differ from the notion of Fate in Greek tragedy ?

Ans. "The gist of the answer," says Verity, "is that Shakespeare endows all characters with the free-will by which a man can withstand his so-called Fate, if he chooses. Banquo and Macbeth pass through the same ordeal : the one is unscathed, the other succumbs, because he chooses to dally with the thought of Duncan's murder." For full answer consult Introduction.

Q. 15. "One of the most difficult of Shakespeare's tragedies to classify, or seemingly to fit into our modern

conception of tragedy at all, *Macbeth* has meant different things to different generations." Discuss.

Ans. In Shakespeare's own day, **Seneca** was the ideal for tragedy. The end of poetry was 'to teach and to delight', and the components of true tragedy were therefore Seneca and instruction. The Senecan *Macbeth*, with its exhibition of a tyrant in action, its revelation of his innermost soul, and its demonstration of the just retribution that inevitably awaits him, probably seemed to critics a more satisfactory tragedy than any other of his plays. Indeed, it almost looks as if in the writing of it Shakespeare had consciously in mind Sidney's famous description of......high and excellent tragedy that openeth the greatest wounds, and sheweth forth the ulcers that are covered with tissue; that maketh kings fear to be tyrants, and tyrants manifest their tyrannical humours; that, with stirring the affects of admiration and commiseration, teacheth the uncertainty of this world and upon how weak foundations gilden roofs are builded. Every point tallies, including some quotations from Seneca's *Oedipus*, which might have stood as a motto on Shakespeare's title-page had he elected to publish this play. When we remember too that Macbeth was *the* tyrant of Scottish history, and that the play was written for the delight of a Scottish king, who was in his own conceit the inspired exponent of the rights and duties of Christian Monarchy, its didactic implications for Shakespeare's original audience become still more obvious. Lastly, think of *Macbeth* as a tragic 'mirror for magistrates,' and you have an entirely satisfactory explanation of the dialogue between Malcolm and Macduff in 4·3, on bad kings and good, which seems to us a tiresome digression chiefly because we have ceased to interest ourselves in a topic that much engaged the minds of the British Solomon and his court. It had engaged him indeed from boyhood; for had not that stern tutor, **George Buchanan**, dedicated to him while still a lad of ten, a Senecan tragedy of Herod and John Baptist, *'quod tyrannorum cruciatus, et, cum florere maxime vedentur, miseria dilucide exponate'*?

But James was interested in it for another reason also. As Shakespeare's most direct and elaborate treatment of the

mysterious, yet very actual realm of evil, which pressed close upon men's mind in that age, and was believed to be thronged with malignant spirits able at once to direct the operation of nature and to influence the human soul, *Macbeth*, undoubtedly appealed even more powerfully to the author of *Dæmonologie*, 1597, than did its anatomy of tyranny to the author of the *Trew Law of Free Monarchies*, 1598, and *Basilikon Deron*, 1599. Indeed, just as a knowledge of ghost-lore is necessary to the full understanding of *Hamlet*, so the present-day spectator of *Macbeth*, who lives in a scientific age from which witchcraft has been long since banished, and in which the terrors of hell have given place to the terrors of the atomic bomb, must miss not only more than half the feeling of awe and dread which the play originally inspired, but also a very great deal of the point and relevancy of the text. This is a matter to which I must return later. At the moment it is enough to note that *Macbeth* still retained this appeal in some measure throughout the eighteenth century, and that the following account, written in 1774, of the emotions aroused in the breast of one enthusiastic and intelligent spectator probably gives us a fair idea of the attitude of an audience in Shakespeare's day. After citing *Macbeth* as an example of Shakespeare's power of exhibiting the process of change in human character, **Maurice Morgann** continues :

The Weird Sisters rise, and order is extinguished. The laws of nature give way, and leave nothing in our minds but wilderness and horror. No pause is allowed us for reflection : Horrid sentiment, furious guilt and compunction, air-drawn daggers, murders, ghosts, and enchantment shake and *possess us wholly*. In the meantime, the *process* is completed. Macbeth changes under our eye, *the milk of human kindness is converted to gall : he has supped full of horrors*, and his *way of life is fallen into the sear, the yellow leaf ;* whilst we, the fools of amazement, are insensible to the shifting of place and the lapse of time, and till the curtain drops, never once wake to the truth of things, or recognise the laws of existence.

It is how Mr. Gielgud's or Wolfit's audiences experience *Macbeth*——"I think not. I think them capable of

entering with much understanding into the 'process' of the hero's 'change' as Shakespeare first conceived it, which was no other than the history of a human soul on its way to Hell, a soul at first noble, humane, innocent, then tempted through ambition to commit an appalling crime; and last, passing through the inevitable stages of torment and spiritual corruption that precede damnation. And what of the play's 'enchantment,' the atomosphere supplied by witchcraft and apparitions, thunder and lightning, 'fog and filthy air?'' Does it not seem more than a little childish to spectators *blase* with synthetic mickey-mouse magic? Yet it was just this, we can be sure, that most arrested groundlings and judicious alike in Shakespeare's day. *Macbeth* was, indeed, a triumph of the latest stage-technique—the witches rising up and down from the 'cellerage' or 'hell' through traps, or vanishing into artificially created mists, the stage likewise artificially darkened in the scene after Duncan's murder, the 'blood-boltered' ghost of Banquo suddenly appearing upon Macbeth's stool, the three apparitions springing out of the blazing cauldron in the cave, the wonderful 'show of eight kings' passing one by one across the back of the stage. Nothing of its kind so bold or so elaborate had been seen before, and it was the desire to exploit these purely theatrical attractions still further which led to the degradation of the text at the hands first of **Middleton** and later of D'Avenant. No, Shakespeare's *Macbeth* possessed a fascination and a meaning for King James and his Jacobeans which have now to a large extent passed away and even passed out of mind.

Yet, their dates was not out for another hundred and fifty years. Though, debased in D'Avenant's recension and padded out with songs and dances, the *Macbeth* which **Pepys** and Restoration London admired for its 'divertisement' became a king of trafic opera, its moral and spiritual appeal remained unchanged. **Pepys** speaks of it as a 'deep tragedy'; by which he meant no doubt that it was profoundly edifying, while the neo-classic principles upon which this conception was based were still inspiring **Johnson** in 1765 when he added a postscript to the play which concluded with these words, words that might have been written by **Sidney** himself :

"The passions are directed to their true end. Lady Macbeth is merely detested; and though the courage of Macbeth preserves some esteem, yet every reader rejoices at his fall."

If Lady Macbeth is no longer 'merely detested,' and we now admire in Macbeth something more than courage, that is due to what may be called the Shakespearean character-writers, who were already getting to work in **Johnson's** *day*, just as the play's original appeal was beginning to fade. The first serious study of the hero which was written in 1770, by **Thomas Whately**, uncle of the famous archbishop, drew special attention to the 'apprehensions' which are so marked a feature of his character and distinguish it in particular from Shakespeare's earlier Senecan figure of Richard III. **Hazlitt** praised this essay and borrowed from it, while it seems likely that **Coleridge** had read it too, since his notes on the play are largely taken up with just those 'recoilings' and 'terrors' which are **Whately's** theme. But while **Coleridge** followed his predecessors in associating these with a troubled conscience, he originated the idea which most have since held, that Macbeth seems himself to be largely unaware of the conscience that troubles him. It was he too that first stressed the essential womanliness of Lady Macbeth, who was only a 'monster' to **Steevens** and other eighteenth-century critics, and 'a splendid fiend, even to her great impersonator, Mrs. Siddons. Yet as we shall see, **Coleridge** to some extent darkened counsel, while it is strange that the author of *Biographia Literaria* should never have attributed an 'imagination' to Shakespeare's greatest man of imagination, or that the creator of *The Ancient Mariner*, which owes so much to this play, should not even have spoken of him as a poet. It was left to Andrew Bradley to discover these things, and they were great discoveries indeed. But when **Bradley** insists that the imagination is limited, that Macbeth 'shows no sign,' for example, 'of any unusual sensitiveness to the glory of beauty in the world in the soul,' and when he gives this as in part the 'reason that we have no inclination to love him and that we regard him with more of awe than of pity,' one is amazed.

In truth, as **John Bailey** has said, 'there is no one in all Shakespeare who so continually, almost invariably, speaks the very greatest poetry as Macbeth.' But it is in his reluctance to pity Macbeth that **Bradley** seems to come most short ; and is at the same time most surprising, since pity is of the very essence of tragedy. Yet he could hardly help himself ; since, though he sets it down as an effect of Macbeth's poetic limitations, his hesitation really sprang from quite other causes, causes connected with the textual situation.

For critical opinion about Macbeth had taken another turn in the second half of last century. With the exception of **Johnson,** the majority of eighteenth-century critics who speak of him as he was before he met the Witches discover a very noble soldier, full of that 'milk of human kindness' which his wife herself attributes to him. And even **Johnson** was so moved by the proud magnanimity of

> I dare do all that may become a man ;
> Who dares do more is none.

that he declared that the lines 'ought to bestow immortality on the author, though all his other productions had been lost.' **Schlegel** perhaps best expressed the general view when he declared that, though he might have portrayed 'a hardened villain,' Shakespeare preferred to exhibit a more sublime picture of an ambitious but noble hero, yielding to a deep-laid hellish temptation ; and in whom all the crimes to which, in order to secure the fruit of his first crime, he is impelled by necessity, cannot altogether eradicate the stamp of native heroism.

And, in taking leave of the play, he adds :

> However much we may abhor his actions, we cannot altogether refuse to compassionate the state of his mind ; we lament the ruin of so many noble qualities.

Goethe implied the same when he ranged Macbeth with Hamlet and Brutus, and found him driven like them into a toil from which he was unable to extricate himself. **Coleridge** too spoke of his 'heroic character.' Yet his

reference elsewhere to an early 'birth-date of guilt' and of fancy with ambitious thoughts raised doubts of this nobility for the first time ; and the doubts seemed amply confirmed by **Koester's** *article* in 1865, which came to be accepted by most as proof that Macbeth had schemed the murder before the opening of the play. And though Bradley, we have seen, did not accept it as such, it clearly shook him, and led him to scrutinise the text narrowly for evidence of the earlier and more favourable conception of the hero's character, with the result that while admitting 'a keen sense both of honour and of the worth of a good name,' and again that 'he was far from devoid of humanity and pity,' he found it impossible to subscribe either to his nobility or to his 'human kindness.' Meanwhile Koester's discovery ruled out in the eyes of most subsequent critics even the good that **Bradley** allowed for ; and so Macbeth became the 'hardened villain' which earlier critics believed Shakespeare had rejected in favour of 'a more sublime picture.' Let that honest and sensitive writer **Joh Bailey** who found it impossible to brush Koester aside, speak for all. Campbell, he first reminds us, called *Macbeth* 'the greatest treasure of our dramatic literature,' and then he continues :

I do not know whether anyone would to-day repeat that judgment, which I confess I do not understand. In nearly all the qualities which make up the greatness of a great tragedy it seems to me to come distinctly behind its three great rivals. It neither interests the mind, nor moves the heart, nor fills the imagination, as do Hamlet and Othello and Lear. He does not explain how, if it satisfied neither mind nor heart nor imagination, it can rightly be called a tragedy at all. Maybe, remembering Aristotle's exclusion from the category of tragedy all drama which exhibits 'an extremely bad man falling from happiness into misery,' he thought it wiser not to try.

Q. 16. Shakespeare found the notion of the character of Macbeth in Stewart's *Chroniclis*. Discuss.

Ans. It is not easy in any case to regard Macbeth as a tragic hero in Aristotle's sense. We can at least

return to the old notion, which Shakespeare found explicit in **Stewart's** *Croniclis*, of a character that begins by being admirable and falls from grace under the stress of great temptation. Such a hero will be capable of moving us to compassion ; of making us feel that, given his stature and the strength of the temptation which assails him, we might have endured a like fate ; of compelling us to cry out 'God, God forgive us all' as we contemplate the spectacle of his tremendous catastrophe. By setting that cry on the Doctor's lip Shakespeare associated pity with the ruin of his 'fiend-like queen.' It is not likely that he, of all dramatists, would invite pity also for the other and contrive it except by representing Macbeth as a hero in the full sense of that word at the outset of the play, as one who possessed the instincts of a Henry V if without his stability, and above all as a great Elizabethan gentleman, tender, magnanimous and honourable as well as brave ? **Holinshed** offered him, in the three campaigns against Macdonwald, Sweno and Canute, excellent material for the display of such qualities. But we shall never know whether or how far he made use of the opportunity, because some other hand has cut to pieces the scene or scenes dealing with these campaigns. All that remains is the picture of Bellona's Bridegroom, a skilful general and a soldier of superhuman strength and bravery.

Yet more may be legitimately inferred. Speaking of the treacherous Cawdor, Duncan announces in the last line of the same scene :

What he hath lost, noble Macbeth hath won.

That word 'noble,' thus placed and winged with rhyme, was surely intended to introduce us in the next scene to something more than a great soldier. **Mr. Masefield**, again, noting the politeness with which he takes leave of Ross and Angus at the end of this same next scene, remarks on 'the delicate good manners, which make him a winning man' and bids actors who play him 'ever remember that Shakespeare gave Macbeth an exquisite sensibility, a charm hard to resist, an eloquence like the tongue of an angel.' When I read this, it carried instant conviction ; for I recollected not only that Shakespeare bes-

towed his finest poetry upon him, but that he wrote it for the golden voice of Richard Burbage. Nor do I doubt that Lady Macbeth perhaps played in 1606 by the young Evas who was presently to 'boy' Cleopatra's greatness was meant to be equally captivating. They make, in fact, the perfect host and hostess; and the lovely sunlit scene in which she welcomes Duncan under her battlements is, for all the irony that mocks it, none the less a thing of sheer delight in its display of beautiful courtesy on both sides. Further, having endowed his hero with supreme poetic genius, could Shakespeare deny him what in his own experience was inseparable therefrom, a human heart? He found in Holinished a Macbeth 'somewhat cruel of nature'; and his Macbeth after he has 'supped full with horrors' becomes cruel enough, though never I believe 'of nature.' But before the first murder he is, Lady Macbeth tells us, too full o' th' milk of human kindness.' She speaks no doubt in impatience and with some contempt. But impatient contempt makes the testimony more and not less striking. And as **Kittredge** points out it is confirmed by Macbeth's unconscious self-revelation in the great tribute to pity in the soliloquy of scene 7. For my own part, I suspect that Shakespeare, reading in **Holinshed** that Duncan 'had too much of clemency,' translated the phrase into his own words and transferred the quality to the yet untempted, unstained Macbeth.

Q. 17. Give a psychological sketch of Macbeth's character ?

Ans. Prof. Bradley observes, "Assuming that Macbeth was no criminal to start with but an honourable soldier, cast in titanic mould, and that the initial step in his tragedy was

> So foull ane blek for to put in his gloir,
> Kuhilk haldin wes of sic honour befoir,

We propose to discuss this question by tracing in brief outline his spiritual development, utilising for the purpose at once the findings of modern Shakespearean critics and our limited knowledge of what the original audience thought and felt about the forces of evil in the universe

which form the background of the tragedy as is made clear by the prologue-like appearance of the Weird Sisters in the first and third scenes.

Temptation first comes to Macbeth with the fulfilment of the second prophecy of the Sisters immediately, upon their disappearance. The start he gives when hailed 'King hereafter' shows indeed that this mind had been 'rendered temptable by previous dalliance of the fancy with ambitious thoughts'. But *murderous* thoughts are not born until Ross and Angus bring tidings that he is Thane Cawdor and he realises that 'the devil can speak true'. The thoughts come suddenly, and obviously quite unexpectedly. They fill him with horror ; his hair stands on end ; his heart knocks against his ribs; he is lost in a trance. It is an astonishing glimpse this, of a stricken soul at the very moment of temptation, and it is given us that we may be under no misunderstanding. For if the thought that now 'shakes so his single state of man' had long been his, if he were not an innocent spirit reeling under an utterly unforeseen attack the symptoms we are shown would be meanigless. The internal struggle is also quite obviously a conscious one, while the assault of the Tempter seems at first repelled ; for Macbeth flings free with

> If chance will have me King, why, chance may crown
> Without my stir.

Yet his next aside,

> Come what come may,
>
> Time and the hour runs through the roughest day,

is less positive, and there are other signs that ambition, like

> Rank corruption mining all within,
> Infects unseen.

Thus when the direct attack comes with Duncan's public nomination of Malcolm as his heir, which destroys all possibility of being satisfied except by unholy means, Macbeth's powers of resistance have clearly weakened. For,

though the thought is no less detestable and the deed is as terrible as ever, still too terrible to be named, he has moved appreciably nearer to it

Stars, hide your fires ;
Let not light see my black and deep desires :
The eye wink at the hand ; yet let that be
Which the eye fears, when it done, to see.

Yet let that be. "—there speaks an already lost soul. And he has still to encounter Satan's sworn ally at his own hearth in the person of his wife and 'dearest love'."

Q. 18. Give a keynote revealing Lady Macbeth's character.

Ans. Bradley claims' "To get the full measure of Lady Macbeth's intervention, it is necessary to realise the appalling character of the prayer she offers the spirits of murder and destruction, when on her first appearance she hears of Duncan's impending visit. To take this as a mere rhetorical expression of her determination is to miss more than half the horror of it. When Jacobean spectors heard

Come you spirits
That tend on mortal thoughts, unsex me here,
And fill me, from the crown to the toe, top-full
Of direct cruelty......Come to my woman's breasts,
And take my milk for gall, you murd'ring ministers,
Wherever in your sightless substances
You wait on natures' mischief,

they interpreted the words literally : she was in fact invoking the powers of Hell to take possession of her body, to suck her breasts as demons sucked those of witches, to expel from her not only all signs of grace but the least 'compunctious visitings of nature'...Many of Shakespeare's audience must have imagined her as indeed 'possessed' from this time ownwards. Yet Shakespeare himself leaves it open. The demons she summons do not rid her of all 'visitings of nature', since when it comes to the point of

Duncan's resemblance to her father as he slept *does* shakes her fell purpose, while the sleep-walking scene shows that her creator still felt and claimed pity for her. Yet her was a temptress more inescable than the Witches themselves, one whom Goethe, not without reason, names the Super-witch.

That she knows her man is shown in her comments upon his letter, and when they meet she rides him at first on the snaffle : she hints at the deed no more; and once assured by his advantage by forcing him to speak of it openly, she leads him unconsciously forward by removing from his path the terror that immediately confronts him. 'No,' says she in the effect, 'there is no need for you to think about the night's business at all. Your task is to look like the innocent flower......Leave all the rest to me.' There follows, we have seen, a dramatic lacuna of some kind; and when we are next allowed to look into Macbeth's mind, the great soliloquy which opens 1·7 reveals a fresh state of his disease. The assassination, never named before, is now debated, at first quite coolly, and not on moral grounds at all but purely from the point of view of self-interest. What alone checks his hand, he tells himself, is the thought of the evel consequences that may ensue for the assassin, in this world. Assassination is catching, and others may try it on him ; as kinsman, subject and host he will seem a triple traitor in men's eyes ; Duncan is so virtuous and excellent a king that his death will excite the pity of the whole world and draw down a universal curse upon the murderer : such is the drift. **Coleridge** seems to suggest that until after the murder Macbeth succeeds in hiding from his conscience, as if conscience is conceived by Shakespeare as something external to the criminal. There is no evidence for such views before this soliloquy. On the contrary, the struggle between good and bad had clearly, I said, been internal and perfectly conscious up to this point, and the chief purpose of the soliloquy is to show that the struggle is ceasing, that evil is very nearly triumphant. Yet the voice of the good angel can still be heard by us, though not by Macbeth, speaking through the poetry wdich reveals his subconscious mind. 'We'ld jump the life to come' shows

him far gone indeed on the road to perdition ; yet in the same breath he uses a metaphor, 'this bank and shoal of time,' which shows that thoughts of eternal issues are near at hand. And the angel-voice grows yet more audible in the Blake-like imagery which comes to him as he contemplates the martyrdom of his King : calls up awe-inspiring visions of Doomsday, and Pity, and God's all-seeing cherubim ; and works up to a tremendous climax which leaves the speaker exhausted."

Q. 19. Give the significance of Macbeth's soliloquy with reference to his character.

Ans. Coleridge sums up the soliloquy : 'Macbeth enumerates the difficult worldly impediments to his scheme of murder : could he put by them, he would "jump the life to come".' 'He doe not notice that the impediments enumerated all proceed on the assumption that the deed is to be performed openly : could Macbeth procure Duncan's death without being known as the murderer, the assassination would trammel up every consequence he can think of. It is, moreover, still the problem of the consequences to himself that engages his conscious thought for the rest of the scene, which can only be rightly understood if we grasp that fact. For he is no longer held back by any but 'prudential fears', and it is these which inspire the objections he now urges upon his wife, *viz.*, the risk of putting his newly-won glory in jeopardy, and the risk of failure. What he needs is the ring of Gyges the receipt of fern-seed that he may walk invisible. Lady Macbeth taunts him with cowardice; tells him his love for her is worthless; shows hirself a mere woman, far more resolute than he : he remains sullen, unresponsive through it all. And then by teaching him that all suspicion of the murder may be shifted to the grooms, she suddenly hands him the talisman his soul craves. He is at once afire, lost in admiration for her single-minded determination, and eagerly filling in the details of her scheme ! **Bailey** calls the latter 'absurd'; and **Bradley** maintains that she invents it 'on the spur of the moment, and simply in order to satisfy' him. Perhaps so; but at any rate he is satisfied. 'I am settled', he declared ; and never

swerves from his purpose. She has given him his orders; the tactic·l plan lies clear before him. How soldier-like it all is! As for conscience, it is now utterly insensible, and only reawakens for a time when he finds himself confronted, there on Duncan's bed, with

> The deep damnation of his taking-off.

And between these two points comes the soliloquy of 'the air-drawn dagger' which is *his* sleep-walking scene. The whole is spoken in trance; in, I believe, a horrible smiling trance. He is 'settled'; has at length yielded himself a passive agent; and, when the dagger points him towards the fatal chamber, begins moving softly and involuntarily thither 'with Tarquin's ravishing strides', as if led by some invisible hand.

This tremendous picture of a human being, first tempted, then little by little possessed by the idea of murder, and last so completely under its sway that be becomes oblivious of everything else, has no parallel that I know of in literature except Dostoieffsky's description of the stages through which Raskolnikoff passed on his way to the flat of the old miser; and Shakespeare has something Dostoieffsky lacks, the poet's tongue.

Thereafter, however, the two heroes proceed in opposite directions: Raskolnikoff climbing painfully towards redemption, Macbeth plunging furiously downwards along the road to Hell. We have space for only one or two comments upon this phase of Shakespeare's tragedy. First, it may be asked, of what nature are the 'terrible dreams that shake him nightly' or the 'restless ecstasy' that makes his bed a 'torture of the mind?' And there are other references to night as a time of terror. 'You lack the season of all natures, sleep,' his wife says, as if to explain his conduct in the banquet scene; 'Duncan is in his grave,' he himself says enviously:

> After life's fitful fever he sleeps well;

while he gives as his reason for Macduff's death

> That I may tell pale-hearted fear it lies,
> And sleep in spite of thunder.

Two things may be said with certainty about this. On the one hand, as all have noticed, Macbeth himself associates these 'recours in the vessel of his peace' with a sense of danger and insecurity, so that their effect is to drive him on from crime to crime. Hence his 'fears in Banquo stick deep' and he dreams apparently that he is being murdered by him; fears and dreams that can only be stilled by his death; hence, no sooner is Banquo removed, than Macduff takes his place as the imagined menace; hence at a later stage the unpremeditated and senseless murder of Lady Macduff and her children; hence finally an indiscriminate slaughter, so that Scotland hears.

> Each new morn
> New widows howl, new orphans cry, new sorrows
> Strike heaven on the face.

On the other hand, all this is somehow connected with the dreadful voice, which he hears immediately after the assassination of Duncan, crying 'Sleep no more! Macbeth does murder sleep......Macbeth shall sleep no more'. The cry in fact introduces a leading theme of the dramatic poem as a whole, which enveloped as it is in 'thick night' from first to last, may be described as in one aspect a study in sleeplessness. Furthermore, as scene succeeds scene, Macbeth's nerves get more and more out of hand, intense irritability alternating with lassitude.

Bradley, following **Coleridge,** puts all this down to a troubled conscience disguising itself as fear; and there is nothing in the text which forbids us to agree with them. Yet there is equally nothing to show that Macbeth's conscience is alive at all during the last three acts, while quite a different explanation no doubt suggested itself to a Jacobean audience, and in particular, to the royal author of *Daemonologie, viz.*, that Macbeth, once he had delivered himself up to the Devil by murdering Duncan, became 'possessed'. Learned doctors disputed whether demoniacal possession meant that devils actually entered the minds or bodies of their victims, but all admitted that God allowed them dominion and power over man 'guilty of grievous

offences,' whom they strove to ruin body and soul by 'afflicting, tormenting and vexing their person', by driving them forward ever deeper into sin and by procuring their early and violent death. Furthermore, the theory of Macbeth's possession finds support in a feature of his character which does not appear to have attracted much attention.

At the thought of Banquo's heirs succeeding him he cries :

> Rather than so, come fate into the list,
> And champion me to th' utterance !—

which might be the mere hyperbole of passion, were it not that a similar determination to proceed to all lengths is heard shortly afterwards, on a more strident note and in more precise terms, when he declares that to escape the terrors that afflict him, he is ready to 'let the frame of things disjoint, both the worlds suffer.' **Kittredge** calls this an outburst of 'magnificent egoism' ; and he is right. But it carries with it most shockingly blasphemous implications, hardly possible to any but those in a state of damnation. And a willingness to contemplate, if not to rejoice. That universal dissolution which the Powers of Hell constantly strove to bring about may be seen again in his injunction to the Witches :

> Though you untie winds and let than fight
> Against the churches ; though the yesty waves
> Confound and swallow navigation up ;
> Though bladed corn be lodged and trees blown
> down ;
>
> Though castles topple on their warder's heads ;
> Though palaces and pyramids do slope
> Their heads to their foundations ; though the
> treasure
>
> Of Nature's germens tumble altogether,
> Even till destruction sicken ; answer me
> To what I ask you.

The culminating image here, and one upon which the speaker obviously dwells in delight, seems to envisage a stage beyond the triumph of Hell and destruction of 'both the worlds,' namely, the discovery through the catastrophe, of the hidden seeds of life whether in heaven or earth; seeds which originating in the mind of God, could not themselves be destroyed but might be rendered for ever barren, or productive of mere monstrosity, if trampled altogether in devilish confusion. In other words, Macbeth speaks of a time when the Devil will not only have made an end of God's World, but have rendered its re-creation for ever impossible. After contemplation of so dreadful a contingency, the words,

> I 'gin to be aweary of the sun,
> And wish the estate o' th' world were now undone

sound almost tame, and are, I think, intended to mark the sinking of the volcanic fires before the end.

To sum up, Macbeth's whole mind is set on destruction. With **Milton's** Satan he might say

> For only in destroying I find ease,
> To my relentless thoughts.

"Shakespeare had to avoid blasphemous words; and there is nothing in these passages for the censor to take hold of. But he certainly wished his audience to imagine a Macbeth thinking blasphemous thoughts, and like Satan and **Marlowe's** *Faustus*, an enemy of God as of man. Yet when we ask whether he also intended them to imagine him a man 'possessed,' all we can say is that, as with Lady Macbeth, he leaves it open for them to do so, and that, contemporary opinion being what it was, many of them probably did, while he left it equally open for those who preferred the theory of a tortured conscience to adopt that explanation instead. Further, we must not forget that regicide, the crime for which he was tortured, was one of a peculiarly appalling nature, especially in the eyes of King James.

Q. 20. 'What *Macbeth* tells is not what Shakespeare intended his audience to think of mysterious world, but what he knew they were capable of thinking.' Discuss.

Ans. A study of Elizabethan and Jacobean demonnology, as the recent work of **Professor Curry** has shown, is of first class importance of *Macbeth*, though not quite for the reasons Professor Curry supposes. What it tells is not what Shakespeare intended his audience to think of mysterious personages and events like the Weird Sisters, the Ghost of Banquo, the air-drawn dagger, the voice that cried 'Sleep no more,' the prodigies that follow the murder of Duncan, the apparitions in the cave; but what he knew they were capable of thinking. Take the voice for example. Was it a devil, a good angel, or conscience speaking, or was it, as Macbeth himself explains the dagger, a mere hallucination.

a false creation
Proceeding from the heat-oppressed brain ?

Here are four explanations easily possible for a seventeenth-century spectator, and the other phenomena just mentioned were capable of a similar variety of interpretation. Thus the right attitude towards 'the demoniac metaphysics of *Macbeth*' is to think of it and use it in the way Shakespeare himself thought of it, and used it, namely, as a source of suggestion and atmosphere, not for information. *Macbeth* was not intended to supply the age with a spiritual or psychological exposition of the criminal mind, still less with 'a dialogical discourse of spirits and devils,' but to enthral London with a new play in which the author took for his high light, as a change from the themes of *Hamlet*, *Othello* and *Lear*, the mind of a great man turned criminal, and availed himself of the demonological notions of his audience to intensify the Chiaroscuro.

Furthermore, Macbeth's heaven-defying fury, which first led me to the foregoing observations, has a purpose more relevant to dramatic art than any revelation of his psychological processes could be ; it shows him as a rebel against fate, against the whole 'estate o' the world,' against 'both the worlds, natural and supernatural ; a rebel refusing to recognize defeat and fighting his last and hopeless battle with growing despair but undiminished

resolution. For Macbeth is a Shakespearean hero ; and though

his face
Deep scars of thunder had intrenched, and care
Sat on his faded cheek,

he still looks out at us 'under brows of dauntless courage,' still rears a mighty form which

had not yet lost
All her original brightness; not appeared
Less than Archangel ruined.

I apply to Macbeth words used of Lucifer in Hell because I think either hero helps us to understand the other. That the two figures are closely akin both Shakespeare and **Milton** acknowledge ; Shakespeare by the line.

"Angles are bright still though the brightest fell,"

which flashes out like a jewel in the midst of a rather ordinary piece of dialogue, and shows what he had in mind; **Milton** by the fact that he himself contemplated at one time the writing of the play on Macbeth and by the many indications in the *Paradise Lost* of his study of Shakespeare's play. In short, *Macbeth* is not a moral treatise, as King James and his successors down to the time of **Dr. Johnson** may have supposed, or a profound psychological analysis of two criminal types of **Coleridge** and his disciples have intended to assume, or even an essay in Jacobean demonology as modern sociological critics might imagine, but a great tragedy.

Q. 21. "The theme of *Macbeth* might have been directly inspired by 'the pitiful state of humanity' of which we today are all to conscious." Comment

Ans. The theme of *Macbeth* "is that of all Shakespeare's mature tragedies, man and the universe, and its purpose is to present us with a 'dazzling vision of the pitiful state of humanity.' The words are **Walter Releigh's** and we know of no account of Shakespearean tragedy in general and of *Macbeth* in particular at once more illumi-

nating, and more satisfying than the paragraph that follows them. Written forty years ago, it might have been directly inspired by 'the pitiful state of humanity' of which we to-day are all too conscious. It may serve to remind us also how greatly opinion about *Macbeth*, which stands from age to age 'an ever-fixed mark' has changed and deepened since it was first presented to the view of King James. Observing that Shakespeare's tragic vision is 'so solemn and terrible and convincing in its reality' that we try to escape from it by expounding his tragedies as moral fables." **Raleigh** continues :

"But here we have to do with an earthquake. and good conduct is of no avail. Morality is not denied ; it is overwhelmed and tossed aside by the inrush of the sea. There is no moral lesson to be read, except accidentally, in any of Shakespeare's tragedies. They deal with greater things than man ; with powers and passions, elemental forces, and dark abyss of sufferings with the central fire which breaks through the crust of civilization, and makes a splendour in the sky above the blackness of ruined homes. Because he is a poet, and has a true imagination, Shakespeare knows how precarious is man's tenure of the soil, how deceitful are his quiet orderly habits and his prosaic speech. At any moment by the operation of chance, or fate, these things may be broken up, and the world given over once more to the forces that struggled in chaos."

Q 22. "In *Macbeth* there is grandeur and significance far beyond our own limited unaided vision." Discuss.

Ans. *Macbeth* is a tragedy which leaves behind a sense of atonement. " We rise from the all-engrossing experiences which **Morgams** so vividly describes and **Raleigh** illuminates, not appalled but awed, not depressed but enlarged. For though life has been revealed in the wizard's glass as a thing of overwhelming horror and pity, we have discovered there too a grandeur and significance far beyond our own limited vision. 'This dead butcher and his fiend-like queen' is the world's epitaph upon Macbeth and the woman who treads the path of Hell with him. But

we know better. For we have caught our breath at the utterances of her invincible spirit and subjected our imaginations to the 'most commanding and perhaps the most awe-inspiring figure that Shakespeare draws'; while as for the husband, of mettle at first less daunted but always of finer temper than hers, not all the blood he spills can extinguish his native humanity or blot out his splendours. Rather, as the play moves to the inevitable catastrophe and we sit watching his soul in process of dissolution, while we never for a moment condone or excuse his crimes, the personality of the man seems to become at once more portentous and more appealing. And if we ask how can this be, the answer is that, by one if those paradoxes of which Shakespeare possessed the secret, in this volcanic character which through his 'multiplying villainies, growing callousness and ever louder maledtictions, holds us tighter and tighter in the grip of terror, we also see a gigantic reflection of our sinful selves thrown upon the immeasurable screen of the universe, and giving eternal expression, 'with an eloquence like the tongue of an angel,' to the cynicism, and despair, which are the wages of sin, whatever be the creed of a sinner, whatever the origin of

> that perilous stuff
> Which weighs upon the heart."

END